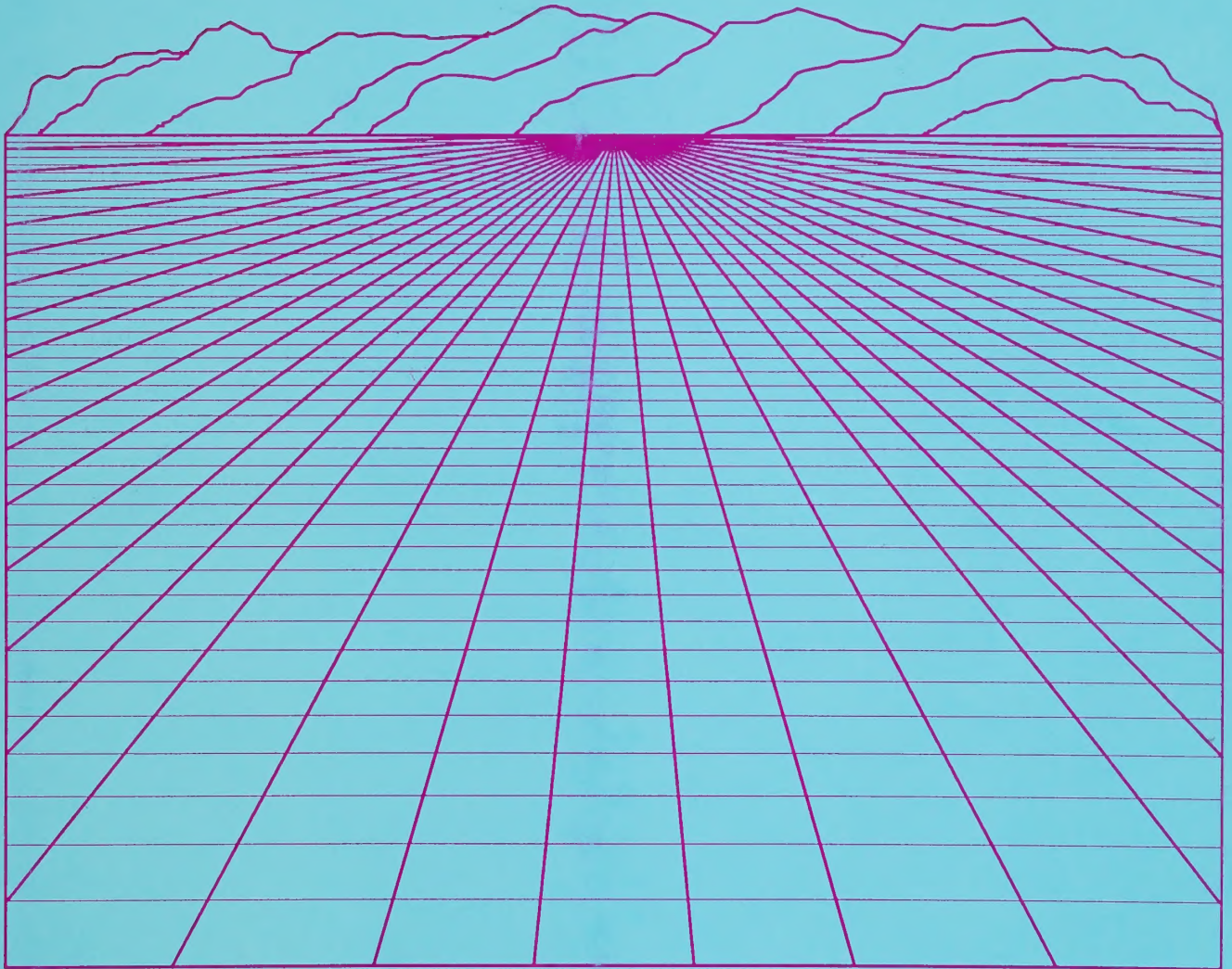



CITY OF
BLYTHE
CALIFORNIA



COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN



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Type: a

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Conf pub: 0

Ctry: cau

Indx: 0

Mod rec:

Govt pub: s

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Desc: a

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Festschr: 0

Illus: a

F/B: 0

Dat tp: s

Dates: 1973,

@ 1 040 UEC lc UEC
@ 2 090 HT168.B5 lb R84

@ 3 090 lb 92 00350

@ 4 049 CBGA

@ 5 110 2 ~~Blythe (Calif.)~~
~~Ruhnau, Evans & Steinmann~~

@ 6 245 10 City of Blythe general plan, / lc prepared by Ruhnau, Evans & Steinmann.

@ 7 260 ~~Riverside, CA: lb Ruhnau, Evans & Steinmann, lc 1973.~~

@ 8 300 117 p. : lb illus., maps ; lc 28 cm.

@ 9 650 0 City planning lz California lz Blythe.

@ 10 651 0 Blythe (Calif.) lx City planning.

300 1 v. : #b ill., folded maps ; #c 28 cm.

500 Cover title: City of Blythe, California comprehensive general plan.

500 Prepared by Terra Nova Planning + Research, Inc.

740 01 City of Blythe, California comprehensive general plan.

NEW

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3-23-92

GENERAL PLAN
FOR THE
CITY OF BLYTHE

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The California Government Code requires that all cities and counties in the state shall prepare comprehensive, long-term general plans which direct the development of the community. As an official document of the City of Blythe, the General Plan provides the goals and policies to guide the development and preservation of the incorporated city, its Sphere-of-Influence and Study Area. In addition to the statements of goals and policies, the General Plan includes issues discussions, diagrams and maps, and plans which provide for the prudent and conscientious management of future development.

This introductory section of the General Plan describes the City of Blythe and its physical and demographic composition. It also describes the planning area which includes the current incorporated city limits, Sphere-of-Influence and General Plan Study Area, thereby providing a regional context and long-term perspective for city planning. Finally, this section provides an overview of the General Plan and its role as the principal development guide for community development.

City of Blythe

The City of Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley region comprise one of the three important agricultural areas in Riverside County. The Palo Verde Valley is located at the extreme eastern portion of Riverside County, along the Colorado River. While the first non-indian visitors to the Valley are believed to have arrived in the latter part of the 18th century, it was not until the latter part of the 19th century that interest in development, specifically agricultural development, began. The original and continuing center of development in the Palo Verde Valley has been the City of Blythe.

The Palo Verde Valley is one of the richest agricultural regions in California, having been created by the continuous flooding of the valley floor by the Colorado River, leaving deep, rich deposits of silt. The region has also become popular and well known for the excellent frontage and access to the Colorado River, and as a gateway to the surrounding desert areas. While expanding to broaden its economic base through the development of its various resources, the City also takes great strides to protect and enhance the rural residential quality of the community, which is highly valued by its residents.

The City of Blythe comprises approximately 3.5 square miles of incorporated area, a limited portion of which is in agriculture. The City's Sphere-of-Influence surrounds the incorporated city limits and comprises approximately 13 square miles. The General Plan Study Area extends from the Colorado River to the east, to and including the Blythe Airport

to the west, and encompasses approximately 63 square miles (see Exhibit I-2). There are no other incorporated communities in the Palo Verde Valley or in the eastern portion of Riverside County, the nearest incorporated community (Indio) occurring approximately 100 miles to the west. The population within the City is approximately 8,000 (1988) and about 11,000 in the General Plan Study Area.

The Palo Verde Valley is an ancient flood plain of the Colorado River, which was regularly inundated until the construction of large dams upstream in this century. The region is very dry, averaging approximately 4 inches of rain per year. The abundant sunshine, mild winter temperatures and the readily available river water attracted agricultural interests, including Thomas Blythe, a San Francisco capitalist after whom the City is named.

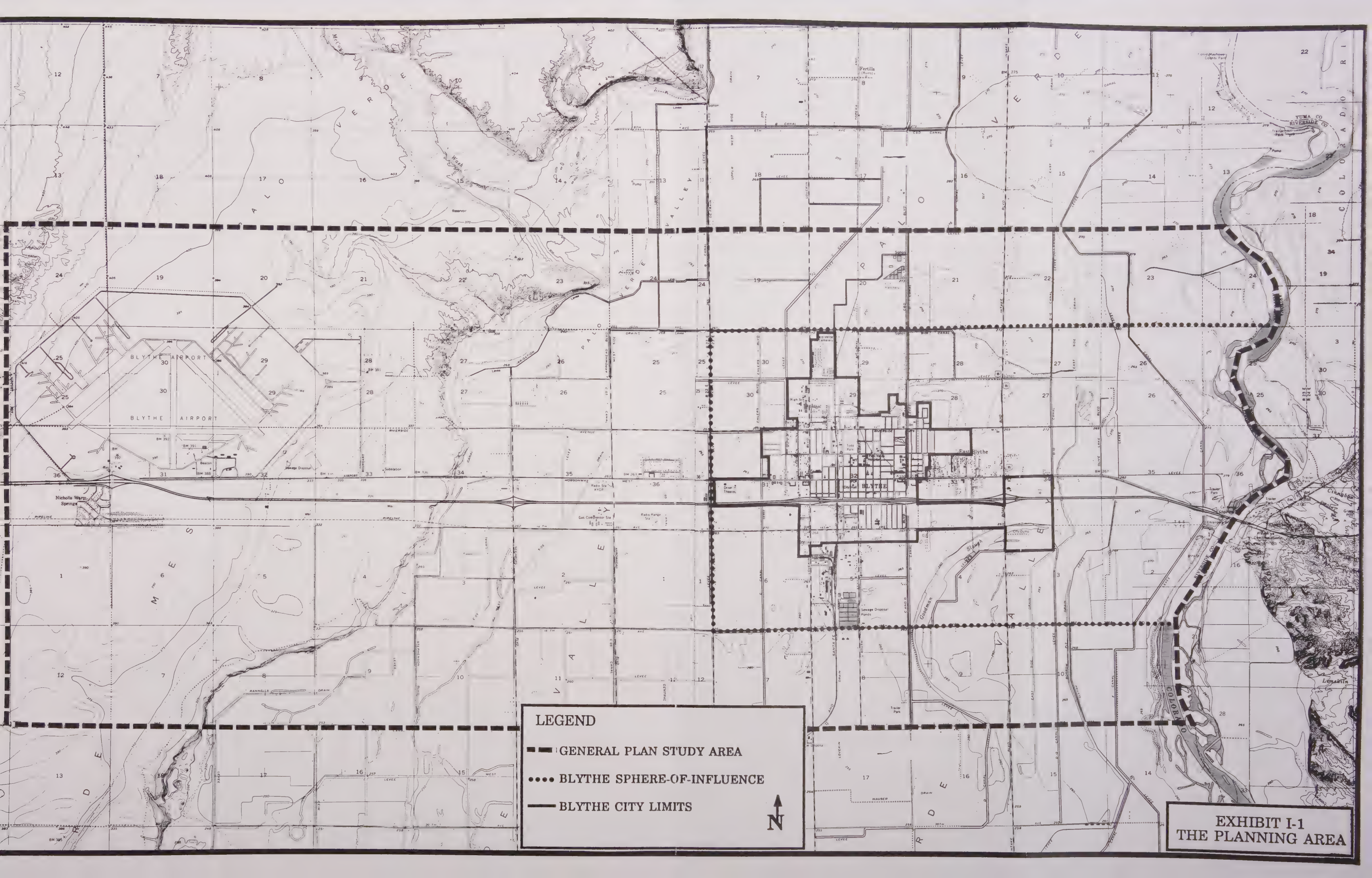
While agricultural interests have flourished since the beginning of the 20th century, it was not until the early 1970s, with the construction of U.S. Interstate-10 freeway, that the Colorado River and surrounding desert resource areas began to draw large numbers of seasonal and weekend visitors. The steadily increasing traffic along I-10, which links the major metropolitan areas of Los Angeles and Phoenix, has also allowed for the substantial development of tourist and traveler-related commercial service.

The General Plan and Environmental Impact Report

The General Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) have been developed to serve as a framework for decision making regarding the appropriate types, intensities and conditions by which development is to be permitted in the City. The process of preparing these documents included the identification of issues, the development of goals and policies, the consideration of various alternatives, the selection of preferred courses of action, and, finally, the development of guidelines for the implementation of the General Plan.

As required by state law, each jurisdiction must prepare and adopt a General Plan and supporting documentation to provide the basis for the community's development. The City of Blythe General Plan identifies the environmental, social and economic goals, and sets forth policies, standards, and programs for existing and future development. The General Plan also provides the framework to analyse and respond to changing circumstances as the City evolves.

The background information and issues are summarized in the General Plan and are discussed in greater depth in the General Plan EIR. Therefore, both documents provide city officials and the General Public with vital information necessary to make informed decisions. The General Plan and the EIR also serve as the basis for subsequent planning efforts, including the preparation of Specific Plans and special environmental and planning studies.



LEGEND

- GENERAL PLAN STUDY AREA
- BLYTHE SPHERE-OF-INFLUENCE
- BLYTHE CITY LIMITS



**EXHIBIT I-1
THE PLANNING AREA**

The General Plan and Environmental Impact report address the entire Planning Area, assigning land uses and projecting impacts from the eventual buildout of the entire Planning Area. This comprehensive planning effort allows the planning of the area to be conducted in a coherent and cohesive manner, providing the framework for continued controlled growth. Buildout, as discussed in the General Plan and EIR, means the eventual complete development of those lands occurring in the General Plan Study Area. While the buildout of the Study Area is not anticipated in the next 20 years, the General Plan serves as a long-term planning tool and provides a context for future growth beyond the typical 20 year time frame.

CHAPTER II: ADMINISTRATION

Introduction

This chapter addresses the administration of the General Plan, through the Administrative Element. Key discussions of this element include the format and content of the General Plan, the various elements, determining consistency with the General Plan, amending the General Plan, and the purpose and scope of the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan plays an important role as a refined version of the General Plan, applicable to a specific portion of the City. Other aspects of the General Plan and its application are also discussed in the Administrative Element, including environmental resource maps, design concepts, and standards.

ADMINISTRATIVE ELEMENT

Background

The Administrative Element provides the standardized system by which the interdependence between physical development and the environmental, social, and economic goals of the General Plan are clarified and integrated to provide the level of information and evaluation necessary to make informed decisions. The Administrative Element provides for the periodic review and amendment of the General Plan, setting forth formal procedures to ensure that the General Plan is maintained and kept current with changing conditions, and that it continues to reflect the goals of the community.

The General Plan facilitates the review and processing of land use and development proposals. Through the review of applicable goals, policies and standards, a proposal is evaluated for consistency with the General Plan. If proposals cannot pass the consistency test, they must be modified so as to assure consistency. So too must amendments to the General Plan itself be consistent with the other Elements of the Plan. The Plan serves to bind both developers and the City to approved and adopted criteria for determining the appropriateness of developer and City activities. Therefore, the General Plan should be viewed as a "constitution" for the City, guiding its development and regulation. A summary of the various goals and policies of the Plan can be found in the appendices.

Format and Content

The Blythe General Plan is organized into five major chapters: Administration, Community Development, Environmental Resources, Environmental Hazards, and Public Services and Facilities. Within each chapter are the various General Plan elements providing background information and related issues, goals and specific policies. Where appropriate, standards and programs are included.

Goals, Policies and Programs

The General Plan goals are developed as broad based statements reflecting the City's values, aims, and aspirations. These goals address the physical development of the City as well as the preservation of the community's important environmental assets. The policies have been developed to implement the goals of the General Plan. The policies set forth specific performance requirements for the various elements. Where programs accompany policies, detailed outlines and directions for implementation of specific policies are provided.

Official maps and graphic examples are incorporated into the General Plan to delineate land use and circulation patterns, scenic highways, and areas requiring special consideration or study. Important or significant environmental resource and hazard areas are also mapped, as well as public and quasi-public facilities. These official maps carry authority equal to the goals and policies of the General Plan.

The General Plan Elements

California Government Code Section 65302 establishes the seven (7) mandatory elements of the General Plan: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Safety, and Noise. It is recognized that some of the required elements may be addressed in combination with other complementary elements, such as Open Space and Conservation. All of the mandated elements are found within the General Plan. This document integrates the mandatory and discretionary elements into five (5) major chapters. State law requires that the General Plan be internally consistent, comprising an integrated and compatible statement of policies for the City. Each element of the General Plan has equal legal authority.

Community Development Chapter

The Community Development chapter most directly affects the character and quality of life of the community, through the distribution of land uses, the intensity and types of housing, the provision of parks and recreational facilities, the establishment of architectural and community design guidelines, the preservation of scenic vistas, and the preservation and enhancement of a healthy economy. This chapter includes the following General Plan elements:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Parks and Recreation
- Community Design
- Scenic Highways
- Economic Development

Environmental Resources Chapter

This chapter describes the resources of the physical natural environment, including man-made artifacts of historical or archaeological significance. Goals and policies are set forth within each element to assure the preservation and enhancement of the physical environment as an important asset of the community. The Environmental Resources chapter includes the following elements:

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Water Resources
- Air Quality
- Mineral Resources
- Energy Resources
- Open Space and Conservation

Environmental Hazards Chapter

This chapter describes the hazards of the physical natural environment, including man-made hazardous conditions and toxic materials. Within each element, goals and policies are set forth which identify specific hazards and means of assuring the protection of public health, safety and welfare. The Environmental Hazards chapter of the General Plan includes the following elements:

- Seismic Safety
- Slopes and Erosion
- Wind Erosion and Blowsand
- Flooding and Hydrology
- Noise
- Hazardous and Toxic Materials

Public Services and Facilities Chapter

The assurance of adequate levels of essential public facilities and services is a principal concern of local government. To assure an adequate level of services and facilities congruent with the level of development anticipated in the City, goals and policies are set forth in each element. The Public Services and Facilities chapter of the General Plan includes the following elements:

- Water and Sewer Services
- Solid Waste
- Public Utilities
- Fire Protection
- Police Protection
- Schools and Libraries
- Health Services
- Emergency Preparedness
- Public Buildings and Facilities

Using The General Plan

The General Plan is a comprehensive information and planning guide established by state law to provide a framework for making informed decisions about the future of the community. The General Plan, and supporting environmental documentation, identifies problems and issues important to the community, analyzes them, and establishes goals and policies which resolve these issues. Special studies and performance programs are also integral parts of the goals and policies.

Project Consistency with the General Plan

Proposals for development, either developer or City initiated, must be analyzed and tested for consistency with the goals, policies, and programs in every element of the General Plan. Inconsistency of a project with the General Plan shall preclude development approval. This test of General Plan consistency is also a required criteria for determining significant impacts under the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

State CEQA Guidelines

The State CEQA Guidelines require that an initial study include "an examination of whether the project is compatible with existing zoning and plans." CEQA Review of Consistency further stipulates that, "A project will normally have a significant effect on the environment if it will conflict with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community where it is located." If a determination is made by the City Council that the proposed action is inconsistent with the General Plan, no further action shall be taken without the completion and processing of an EIR.

Zoning Consistency

California State law also mandates that the city's Zoning Ordinance be consistent with the General Plan. In the event that the Zoning Ordinance becomes inconsistent with the General Plan by reason of an amendment, the zoning ordinance must be amended within a reasonable time so that it is consistent with the General Plan, as amended.

Amending The General Plan

The General Plan is not static, but rather, a dynamic document based upon the community's needs. It is also based on an on-going understanding of existing and projected community needs. To assure that the General Plan is kept current, short-term programs and policies may be reviewed annually to reflect compatibility with budgetary priorities and related program status.

Annual Review

The California Government Code requires that the planning agency "render an annual report to the legislative body (City Council) on the status of the plan and the progress in its implementation" (Section 65400(b)). State law further requires that the Housing Element must be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years.

When The Plan Can Be Amended

The General Plan may be amended up to four (4) times in each calendar year (Government Code Section 65358(b)). It is left to the discretion of the local jurisdiction to establish an amendment schedule to be published one year in advance. As set forth in the California Government Code, the following are exempt from the General Plan Amendment schedule:

- (1) Amendments requested and determined necessary for the development of a residential project, of which at least twenty-five percent (25%) of its units will be available to persons of low or moderate income (Section 65361(b)).
- (2) Any amendment necessary to comply with a court decision in a case involving the legal adequacy of the General Plan (Section 65361)).

Applications for the amendment of the General Plan are filed with the City Department of Development Services. An amendment to the General Plan constitutes a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and therefore is evaluated for its environmental effects and consistency with the General Plan. Final approval of General Plan Amendments shall remain with the City Council.

Specific Plans of Land Use

The Specific Plan of Land Use is a development plan which further refines the General Plan. Specific Plans often provide detailed design and analysis of complex mixed-use projects, and indicate specific land use locations and design. A Specific Plan contains text, exhibits, and diagrams indicating the distribution, location, and intensity of proposed land uses and the necessary public and private urban support systems.

The Specific Plan also defines the standards and criteria by which development and, where applicable, conservation will proceed. Additionally, the Specific Plan provides a program of implementation measures and financing necessary to carry out the project. A Specific Plan is prepared, adopted and amended in the same manner as a General Plan, except that a Specific Plan may be adopted by resolution or ordinance and may be amended as often as deemed necessary by the City Council.

Development proposals within areas designated for Specific Plan preparation in the General Plan cannot proceed until a Specific Plan has been prepared and adopted by the City Council. In areas where the Specific Plan encompasses more than one property, the plan must be completed and adopted prior to development on any affected property. Specific Plans may be prepared either by the applicant or the City. Should the City prepare the Specific Plan, the City is entitled to reimbursement pursuant to Section 65456 of the California Government Code. Specific Plans provide a coherent framework for the cost-effective planning of land uses and infrastructure financing and extension. They help to avoid premature piecemeal and costly construction costs and enhance system efficiencies.

GOAL

1. The General Plan will reflect, set forth and implement the Goals, Policies and Programs of the City in a comprehensive document and provide the decision making framework for the regulation of future growth in the City.

POLICIES

1. Provide for the revision and updating of the General Plan and ensure that associated city ordinances including the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances are maintained in conformance with the General Plan.
2. Provide for the use of Specific Plans as a preferred method of detailed and systematic implementation of the General Plan.
3. The City will examine and review, on an on-going basis, the long-term implications of policies and programs as they relate to the City's ability to provide public services and facilities.
4. The City will continue its role in its Sphere-of-Influence by addressing land use planning issues directly in the General Plan and subsequent Specific Plans.
5. The City shall only approve development or improvement projects which are clearly determined to be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and applicable Specific Plans.
6. The City shall assure the comprehensive review and, as appropriate, revision of the various elements of the General Plan at a minimum of once every five years from the date of General Plan adoption.

CHAPTER III: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

The Community Development Chapter includes the following elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Parks and Recreation, Community Design, Scenic Highways, and Economic Development. This chapter most directly affects the character and quality of life in the community, the distribution of land uses, the intensity and types of housing, the provision of parks and recreational facilities, the establishment of architectural and community design guidelines, the preservation of scenic vistas, and the preservation and enhancement of a healthy economy.

LAND USE ELEMENT

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The essential principle of land use planning constitutes the drafting and adoption of a comprehensive, long-term General Plan of land use which guides the physical development of the community. The process to develop the land use plan involves the analysis of existing land use patterns, the level of available public services and facilities, and consideration of the physical (environmental) constraints and inducements to development. Goals and policies set forth in this element guide the development of the community character and environment.

The Land Use Element and accompanying land use maps describe and designate the distribution of land use by type, location, and intensity or extent of use. Uses to be considered are diverse and include residential, commercial, industrial, open space (including agriculture, natural resources, recreation and scenic resources), education, public buildings and grounds, and other categories of public and private uses of land.

Table III-1 presents, in summary format, a description of the seventeen (17) General Plan land use designations on the land use map. Table III-2 summarizes the amount of acreage in each land use category; the Land Use Map is contained in the map pocket at the end of this document. The development of a community land use element requires the broadest consideration of the issues addressed in all other General Plan elements. It contains and reflects most of the concerns of the community's development, and plays a central role in synthesizing all land use issues, constraints and opportunities.

Table III-1
General Plan Land Use Designations

DESIGNATION		MAX. DENSITY	PURPOSE
R-R	Residential Reserve	1 d.u./10 ac.	Serves as an intermediate land use designation buffering agricultural lands from urban residential development. Precludes premature expansion of urban development.
R-L	Low Density Res.	7 d.u./ac.	Detached single family development typically on self-sufficient individual lots. May be developed as Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) with shared recreation and other amenities. The most common type of residential development in the City.
R-M	Medium Density Res.	14 d.u./ac.	Duplex and multiplex development are typical. Provides for condominium, duplex and apartment development with shared open space/recreation amenities. Mobile home park or subdivision with PRD-type of development, requiring approval of Conditional Use Permit.
R-H	High Density Res.	20 d.u./ac.	Highest density of residential development, typically for affordable and senior housing where smaller units may be appropriate.
U-R	Urban Reserve		Sphere-of-influence and outlying planning areas planned for future urban core (commercial, light industrial, and some high density residential) development. Requires Specific Plan.
C-G	General Commercial		Community-scale centers, grocery, specialty retail, and service business development. Typically 5 to 10 acres.
C-O	Office Commercial		Existing and future office development with limited accessory commercial.
C-N	Neighborhood Commercial		Neighborhood or convenience commercial, typically 1 to 3 acres.
C-T	Tourist Commercial		Commercial uses geared to freeway travelers and area tourists.

Land Use Element

I-S	Service Industrial	Service and service industrial support facilities inappropriate for commercial districts.
I-A	Agricultural Industrial	Industrial uses directly or indirectly related to agricultural activities.
I-L	Light Industrial	Industrial uses which are non-intensive in nature with limited outdoor storage.
I-M	Medium Industrial	Industrial uses which are moderately intensive with potentially more extensive outdoor storage.
I-H	Heavy Industrial	Industrial uses which are relatively intense and which may also include extensive use of outdoor storage.
<hr/>		
P	Public/Quasi-Public	Schools, hospitals, city and county facilities, fire stations, parks and other public facilities.
<hr/>		
OS	Open Space	Areas of special resource value including recreation and biological resource areas.
AR	Agricultural Reserve	Land in active or potentially active cultivation and sufficiently removed from urban development to warrant protection.
<hr/>		

Table III-2
Land Use Statistics Summary

CATEGORY	MAXIMUM DENSITY	Acres /%
<u>Residential</u>		
R-R (Residential Reserve)	1 du/10 ac	1,385/3.7%
R-L (Low Density)	7 du/ac	1,994.4/5.5%
R-M (Medium Density)	14 du/ac	277.5/0.8%
R-H (High Density)	20 du/ac	14.1/0.03%
	Subtotal	3,671/10.03%
<u>Commercial</u>		
U-R. (Urban Reserve)		1,478.4 / 4.0%
C-G (General Commercial)		316 / .8%
C-O (Office Commercial)		21. / 0.05%
C-N (Neighborhood Commercial)		4.3 / 0.01%
C-T (Tourist Commercial)		557 / 1.5%
	Subtotal	2,376.7 / 6.5%
<u>Industrial</u>		
I-S (Service Industrial)		133 / 0.3%
I-A (Agricultural Industries)		18 / 0.04%
I-L (Light Industrial)		207 / 0.6%
I-M (Medium Industrial)		497 / 1.3%
I-H (Heavy Industrial)		362.3 / 1.0%
	Subtotal	1,217 / 3.3%
<u>Institutional</u>		
P (Public and Quasi-public)		1,875 / 5.1%
	Subtotal	1,875 / 5.1%
<u>Open Space</u>		
OS (Open Space)		966 / 2.6%
AR (Agricultural Reserve)		26,372.3/ 72.3%
	Subtotal	27,338.3 / 75%
	Total	36,478 / 100%

Role of the Land Use Plan

The Land Use Element has the broadest scope of all of the Elements, and brings together all of the umbrella issues addressed throughout the Blythe General Plan. It establishes a land use pattern which shall be supported by the extension of the City's infrastructure in an orderly and phased manner. The Land Use Element attempts to balance the various uses within the planning area, and is an implementing portion of the General Plan. While the plan is primarily concerned with future development, inappropriate existing land uses shall not impede sound planning of these areas as they evolve in the future.

The Land Use Element first provides general goals and policies guiding the more designation-specific policies, programs and plan proposals described in each land use designation. The Element is designed to address each land use designation by first providing a summary of existing and anticipated conditions within each of the five (5) major land use categories; Residential, Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, and Open Space. Background information, goals and policies are presented for each major category. Related individual use categories are discussed, describing each land use.

Regulating Building Intensity

Another important function of the Land Use Element is to define standards for building or use intensity. The criteria used to judge building or use intensity vary with the type of land use and may include the number of dwelling units per acre, the maximum area of a lot which may be covered with structures, or the type of use appropriate to the site. Other applicable criteria may include development standards which control building heights or setbacks, traffic generation and impacts on local land uses and infrastructure.

GENERAL GOAL

1. The Land Use Element and Plan shall establish and promote a balanced and functional mix of land uses that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan and the Community.

GENERAL POLICIES

1. The Land Use Map shall reflect the opportunities and constraints identified in other elements of the General Plan and the accompanying Final EIR.
2. Specific land use policies and standards for each land use designation shall reflect the use, its relationship to surrounding land uses and roadways, and its relationship to the character of the community and natural resources and environment.
3. All land use policies and standards contained in the General Plan, and mitigation measures adopted in the Final EIR, shall apply to the determination of General Plan consistency for land use development proposals.

4. The Blythe Zoning Ordinance shall be amended to assure its consistency with the policies and standards of the Land Use Element of the General Plan.
5. The appropriateness and compatibility of a proposed land use shall be determined in light of existing and approved land uses in the surrounding area, and shall include consideration of the intensity of the use, potential hazards, nuisances, aesthetic issues, and design.
6. Infilling is to be encouraged within the corporate boundaries of the City; the extension and development of the City is to be conducted in a manner resulting in a logical and coherent pattern of urban growth.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

Background

The City of Blythe has historically been a rural residential community supporting an important agriculture-based local economy in the Palo Verde Valley. As the only incorporated community with full urban services in extreme eastern Riverside County, the City has also been the regional administrative center for government and private business. The City of Blythe plays the essential role of being the regional focus of employment and housing. In addition to the stable and rapidly increasing permanent population, the City, Sphere-of-Influence and General Plan study area are experiencing increased seasonal population growth.

In 1988, the total number of housing units in the City was estimated at 2,799, with 1,998 units being single family dwellings, and comprising 71.3% of the housing stock. Approximately 733 units, or approximately 26.1% are classified as apartments, with mobile homes comprising the balance of the housing stock. True mobile home development does not occur within the City, most of the units described as such being older units and travel trailers.

The prevalence of single family development reflects the preference for low density development on individual lots. Nonetheless, the City has a substantial number of apartments, which are important contributors to the provision of adequate affordable housing. The Chuckawalla Prison, as an important employment center, also generates demand for apartments as new employees settle and determine if and where to buy a home in the City.

Recent and projected growth trends offer opportunities for significant infill within the city limits, thereby achieving a higher efficiency of land use and infrastructure utilization. The City has benefitted from the slow development of a compact urban core which has allowed the development of removed low density residential neighborhoods. This trend is preserved in the General Plan.

Seasonal Residents

The City and the region benefit from the many thousands of visitors and seasonal residents who take advantage of the exceptional desert weather and desert and river recreation resources. Seasonal residents occupy motels, RV parks and second (frequently mobile) homes in the Palo Verde Valley. The planning area clearly has the potential to attract greater numbers of seasonal residents. Several portions of the General Plan study area, sphere-of-influence and incorporated lands are well suited for seasonal residential development. Recreational Vehicle park development represents an important opportunity to attract and capture the seasonal visitor.

Growth Potential

The General Plan provides for a broad range of residential types and densities, up to 20 units per acre, within several land use designations. A density bonus of up to 25 percent is also available with the provision of affordable housing. The following distribution of residential uses indicates the number of total acres designated for each residential use in the City's corporate boundaries.

Table: III-3
Residential Land Uses (Undeveloped)

Residential Designation	Max. Density	Acres*	Units *
R-R (Residential Reserve)	1 du/10 ac	1,385	138
R-L (Low Density Res)	7 du/ac	1,252	8,764
R-M (Medium Density Res)	14 du/ac	216.3	3,028
R-H (High Density Res)	20 du/ac	14.4	288
TOTAL		2,868	12,218

* Acreage and units represent maximum buildout on a gross acreage basis and are not weighted by existing development. The City's Sphere & General Plan Study Area are included.

Projected City Population

As of 1988, approximately 375 net acres of the City were developed as residences, providing a total of 2,799 dwelling units. Based upon an adjustment for existing development, and considering available vacant lands, the General Plan provides for the maximum potential development of approximately 12,218 additional dwelling units.

Assuming the City's average household size of approximately 3.1 persons, and adding the approximately 3,293 existing housing units in the City and Sphere, a maximum population of approximately 48,084 could result upon buildout. Projections assume the highest possible densities and are largely based upon gross acreages, and are meant to express the upper limits rather than the intensity of residential development most likely to occur. Total buildout of all Study Area lands is assumed. Study Area population at General Plan buildout is expected to be less than the above cited projections.

As the City expands beyond the traditional agriculture-based economy, it is seeing increased dependence upon traveler/tourist commercial business. A steady seasonal population influx has encouraged the development of recreational vehicle and permanent housing, especially along the Colorado River but also in the vicinity of the Municipal Golf Course. The appreciation, by tourists and seasonal residents alike, for the clean desert air, quiet and balmy nights, and unique recreation opportunities encourages the establishment of permanent residences.

Affordable Housing

The City, and all jurisdictions of the State of California, are required by law to assure the provision and availability of decent housing and a suitable living environment for all economic segments of the community, with special attention to very low, low, and moderate income groups. The elderly are also an identified special group which requires special consideration when providing for the community's housing needs (Also see General Plan Housing Element).

RESIDENTIAL GOALS

1. The Residential land use category shall preserve and enhance the predominantly overall low density, rural quality residential character of the community.
2. The Residential land use designations and their assignments on the land use map shall be consistent with the other elements of the General Plan.
3. The Residential land use categories shall assure the provision of a broad range of quality housing for all economic segments of the community.

RESIDENTIAL POLICIES

1. Existing residential areas and surrounding vacant lands shall be designated in a manner which preserves these neighborhoods and assures their continued preservation through the assignment of compatible land uses on surrounding undeveloped lands.
2. Setbacks, building heights, pad elevations and other requirements shall be set forth in development standards for residential land uses, which assure privacy while preserving the rural character of the community.
3. The City shall utilize the Redevelopment Agency and other mechanisms to assure the provision of a full range of housing products, while maintaining the overall rural character of the community.
4. Transfers of development densities shall be permitted in planned unit developments in conjunction with the provision of amenities and open space. Swimming pools, greenbelt, and other open space areas incorporated into these developments shall be designated as Open Space areas to assure their preservation.

5. Provision shall be made to permit the granting of density bonuses in all residential land use areas developed to provide low income/affordable housing units in accordance with State law.

RESIDENTIAL DESIGNATIONS

Residential Reserve (R-R)

The **Residential Reserve** designation of **R-R** provides a buffer between agricultural lands and the urbanizing portion of the City, preventing the premature development of essentially rural lands and assuring the logical and coherent extension of public facilities and services. The **R-R** designation provides for the development of one dwelling unit per 10 acres.

Low Density Residential (R-L)

The **Low Density Residential** designation of **R-L** provides for the development of a maximum of seven (7) dwelling units per acre. The land use designation provides for detached single family development typically on self-sufficient individual lots. R-L designated lands may be developed as Planned Residential Developments (PRDs) with shared recreation and other amenities. R-L land uses shall remain the most common type of residential development in the City.

Medium Density Residential (R-M)

The **Medium Density Residential** designation of **R-M** provides for the development of a maximum of fourteen (14) dwelling units per acre. Appropriate residential development under this designation may include single family and multi-family developments, traditional single family homes, duplex and multiplex development. Provides for condominium, duplex and apartment development with shared open space/recreation amenities. Mobilehome park and subdivision developments may be permitted on R-M lands with the approval of Conditional Use Permits.

High Density Residential (R-H)

The **High Density Residential** designation of **R-H** provides for the development of a maximum of twenty (20) dwelling units per acre. This density range allows for the greatest diversity of residential development, ranging from single family to apartments. This designation is most appropriate for affordable and senior housing where smaller units may be appropriate. Mobilehome parks and subdivisions may also be permitted at densities not exceeding those permitted in the R-M designation (max. 14 units per acre) and only with the approval of a Conditional Use Permit.

COMMERCIAL LAND USES

Background

The economic makeup of the City and the Blythe Region has a significant impact not only on the City's physical development and the type of commercial development in the City, but also on the type and level of revenues these commercial enterprises generate for the City. The City's ability to provide an adequate level of public services and facilities is directly related to the strength of its economic base.

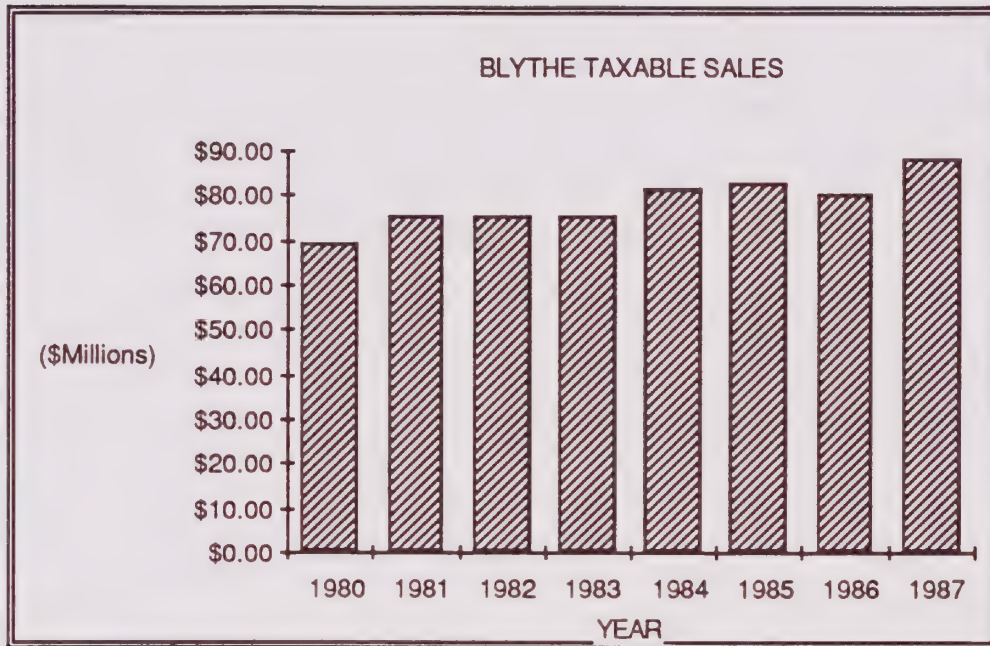
The potential for population, housing and commercial growth are discussed at length in the Economic Development Element of this General Plan. The following briefly describes the various opportunities for expansion of commercial development within the City, and how the Land Use Plan addresses these opportunities.

The General Plan Land Use Map recognizes the existing commercial land uses and vacant lands which have also been designated for commercial development. The General Plan provides for four (4) separate commercial land use categories allowing general commercial, office commercial, neighborhood commercial and tourist commercial developments.

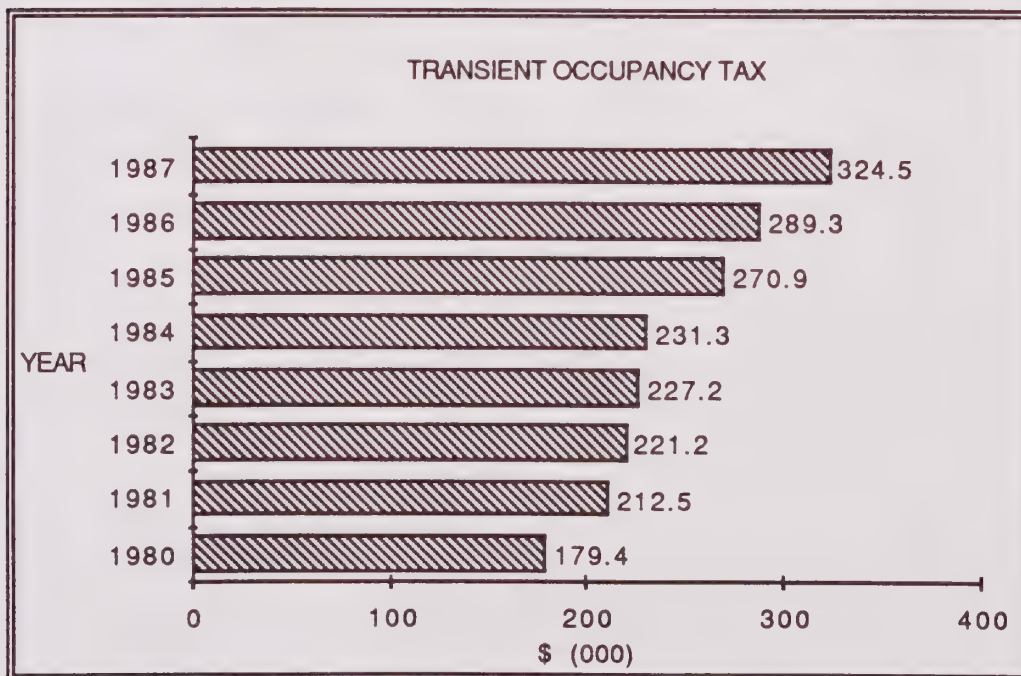
Commercial Growth Trends

Three immediate commercial growth opportunities are identified, from which the City of Blythe may benefit over the next decade. They include the growth in prison employee household formation in the City, the continued growth in demand for off/on commercial service centers to meet the needs of annually increasing Interstate-10 travelers, and the increasing numbers of visitors to the Colorado River and Palo Verde Valley desert recreation facilities. Assignments of commercial land use designations are essential to assuring the continued economic health of the community while protecting non-commercial uses from incompatible land uses.

Prison related household formation, including direct and induced, is expected to add more than \$5 million in taxable sales in the City. The multiplier effect could result in more than an additional \$10 million in taxable sales each year. The continued household formation from the establishment of new residents will, depending upon level of discretionary spending, contribute to increased taxable sales and revenues to the City. The following taxable sales chart indicates the slow but steady climb in taxable sales in the City.



Tourism and traveler revenues have been important indicators as to the growth potential and market to be captured from major traveler commercial and tourist markets. Annual increases in the number of travelers on Interstate-10 also provides some indication of the potential market for commercial services passing through the City. As a measure of growth in tourism and traveler revenues, the following chart of transient occupancy tax collection clearly illustrates this trend.



Commercial Core

The commercial core of the City consists predominantly of retail development located on and near Hobsonway, occurring approximately 1,000 feet north of and parallel to Interstate-10. Previously a state highway, Hobsonway has been the traditional downtown commercial core since the City's beginning. This commercial core extends eastward to the community of East Blythe, where commercial development has ceased, constrained by the lack of public services and infrastructure.

The Blythe commercial core supports two types of retail development, free standing commercial buildings and planned commercial centers. The first type of commercial development makes up the row of differing store fronts located on the north and south side of Hobsonway, and includes restaurants and motels. The City's commercial centers are typical of the neighborhood shopping center, as defined by the Urban Land Institute. Such centers occurring in the City are centered around full-service supermarkets and/or super drug stores. Grocery stores represent the largest commercial segment of the community. In the General Plan these types of uses are termed Community Commercial.

The following distribution of commercial acreage indicates the total additional amount of commercial square footage that may be achieved in the City.

Table III-4
General Plan Commercial Development Potential

<u>Commercial Designation</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Estimated Square Footage (000s)*</u>
U-R (Urban Reserve)	N/A	N/A
C-G (General Commercial)	316	4,818
C-O (Commercial Office)	21	320.1
C-N (Neighborhood Commercial)	4.3	65.5
C-T (Tourist Commercial)	557	N/A
TOTALS	898.3	5,203.6

*** Note:** Square footage assumes 35% site coverage. Not factored for existing development. Acreage shown is gross and does not reflect lands lost to streets and other non-commercial uses. Most of C-T acreage planned for RV park and other quasi-commercial uses. Actual buildout would result in substantially less gross leasable area.

Of approximately 898.3 acres designated for commercial uses, approximately 510.3 acres were vacant in 1988. The vacant acreage typically developed with structures for retail sales has an estimated potential of about 1.5 to 2.5 million square feet. Additional commercial growth in the City's current and planned sphere-of-influence may be assessed as part of the Specific Plan process. Further discussion on commercial development potential is to be found in the Economic Development Element of the General Plan.

COMMERCIAL GOALS

1. Commercial land use categories shall provide a full range of neighborhood, community, service and tourist related commercial development, which takes full advantage of emerging economic development opportunities while preserving the rural character of the residential community.
2. The commercial land use designations and their assignments on the land use map shall be consistent with the other elements of the General Plan.

COMMERCIAL POLICIES

1. Areas of commercial development and surrounding vacant lands shall be designated in a manner which preserves appropriate commercial areas and assures their continued preservation through the assignment of compatible land uses on surrounding undeveloped lands.
2. Building height, setbacks, pad elevations and other development standards and requirements shall be utilized to provide adequate visibility, assure quality development, and preserve the scenic viewshed of surrounding properties and public rights-of-way.
3. Every opportunity shall be made to reduce fragmented commercial development through parcel assembly, master planning of commercial projects, and utilization of the Specific Plan application procedures.
4. Commercial development in that portion of the Sphere-of-Influence west of Defrain Boulevard shall be planned and developed utilizing Specific Plans of Land Use, which shall provide for master planning of commercial and mixed-use centers. Said master planning shall encompass a minimum of 40 acres.
5. Hobsonway, between Defrain Boulevard and Intake Boulevard, shall remain the primary commercial core of the City, with special redevelopment efforts to be made to enhance retail activity in this commercial core area.
6. To prevent the "strip" image of unrelieved commercial frontage, commercial development in the sphere areas located along Interstate-10 and Hobsonway shall be developed as primary commercial nodes to be located at or adjacent to major interchanges and intersections.
7. Commercial development outside of the Interstate-10 and Hobsonway corridors shall be limited to neighborhood commercial services, planned mixed-use centers and commercial office development.
8. The City shall encourage redevelopment efforts along the Hobsonway corridor through the consolidation of lots and concentration of new commercial development.

9. Assure the location of neighborhood and community commercial development in locations which provide easy access to areas of high density and senior residential development.

COMMERCIAL DESIGNATIONS

As stated in the general and commercial goals, the purpose of the various land use categories is to assure the provision of a full range of neighborhood, community and tourist commercial services, while preserving the rural residential atmosphere of the City.

Commercial services in the City, traditionally local, have been substantially expanded in the past decade to provide freeway traveler and tourist commercial services. These expanded commercial activities have greatly enhanced City revenues and provided additional employment opportunities for local residents.

These commercial uses have located along Hobsonway and major north/south streets with I-10 interchanges. The planned concentration of future commercial development in these areas will allow the City to take full advantage of increasing commercial demand, while preserving the quiet of the rural residential areas. The General Plan also provides for the long-term planning and controlled growth of future commercial development.

Urban Reserve (U-R)

The **Urban Reserve** designation of **U-R** provides for the preservation of agricultural lands and other existing land uses for future land uses compatible with those in existing urban core areas of the City. Urban core development is expected to continue along the Interstate-10 corridor. Future development of Urban Reserve lands shall be controlled through the processing of Specific Plans.

General Commercial (C-G)

The **General Commercial** designation of **C-G** provides for the development of community-scale commercial centers with market areas often extending beyond the City limits and immediate environs. The General Plan designation also recognizes the special and varied conditions in the vicinity of Hobsonway, where lot assemblage, planned commercial development and redevelopment are to be encouraged. Commercial lands along Hobsonway support neighborhood and tourist, as well as community-scale needs.

The General Commercial land use category will provide many of the commercial services provided by the neighborhood centers. General commercial services typically provide a broader range of clothing and apparel, furnishings and appliances. Community commercial centers, including planned commercial developments and in-fill commercial strip areas and the above cited uses, typically consist of variety and specialty retail stores including poster art and T-shirt shops, jewelry stores, and men's and women's apparel stores. Smaller, moderately priced department stores may also be appropriate under the General Commercial designation, as well as professional office space.

Neighborhood Commercial (C-N)

The **Neighborhood Commercial** designation of **C-N** provides for the development of residential neighborhood convenience stores with limited gasoline service and limited general retail. The neighborhood commercial center typically ranges from 1 to 3 acres and is located at sites convenient for local residents. These facilities are not meant to replace community-scale grocery stores and similar retail centers.

Office Commercial (C-O)

The **Office Commercial** land use designation of **C-O** provides for the development of professional and medical office space, financial institutions, and associated support facilities, as well as limited retail commercial uses, which are ancillary to office uses, such as restaurant-snack bar, pharmacy, and similar support services. Typically substantially less intense commercial uses such as office development may be appropriate near or adjacent to residential areas.

Tourist Commercial (C-T)

The **Tourist Commercial** designation of **C-T** is assigned to lands which serve or are well suited to provide commercial services to the traveling public, specifically tourists and travelers on Interstate-10. Commercial uses typical of the C-T designation include motels, restaurants, gasoline service stations, and similar uses. C-T lands may also be appropriate for the development of recreational vehicle parks which provide overnight and limited stay facilities. These uses are typically located at or in the vicinity of major I-10 interchanges and are highly dependent upon good freeway visibility and access.

Specific Plan of Land Use (SP)

While not a particular land use category, the Specific Plan of Land Use (Specific Plan) is the vehicle by which larger development plans are prepared and submitted to the City for review and approval. Typically, the Specific Plan is required for commercial and mixed-use developments proposed on holdings of ten or more acres. It is also required for master planning on a minimum of 40 acre planning areas west of Defrain Boulevard and on major developments proposed near or on the Colorado River.

The Specific Plan provides the detailed design and analysis of mixed-use or otherwise complex projects with text, exhibits, and diagrams indicating the distribution, location, and intensity of proposed land uses. It also examines the required level of public facilities and services and their availability. A Specific Plan also establishes the economic viability of larger and/or complex proposed development through the preparation of a market study. The following areas are most appropriate for the use of Specific Plans:

* West Hobsonway/I-10 Corridor is an area generally defined as either side of Hobsonway, extending south across I-10 to 14th Avenue, and extending west from Defrain Boulevard to the western boundary of the General Plan study area. The purpose of utilizing the Specific Plan in this area is to assure the orderly and coherent extension of the urban core and urban services.

* East Hobsonway/I-10 Corridor is an area generally defined as either side of Hobsonway, extending south across I-10 to the easterly extension of 14th Avenue, from Intake Boulevard to the Colorado River. As above, the purpose of utilizing the Specific Plan in this area is to assure the orderly and coherent extension of the urban core and urban services.

* Major Commercial/Mixed-Use Projects proposed within the City, its sphere-of-influence or General Plan study area, and generally comprising 10 or more acres, shall be required to prepare a Specific Plan of Land Use. Where sufficiently intense development is proposed in the unincorporated areas, the City shall request that the County require that a Specific Plan be prepared and processed.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

Background

The Land Use Element provides for various types and levels of industrial land use, including those uses which provide community services but which are not considered retail commercial uses. The industrial use designations provide for established types of development, and categories which have potential for future growth. The designations are guided by performance standards associated with each class or category of industrial use. Therefore, service industrial uses are less intense and most compatible with commercial uses. The heavy industrial designation implies the most intense industrial use with many attributes which make the use incompatible with most other land uses.

Issues examined in the context of performance standards, which determine the appropriate location of the various types of industrial land uses, are noise, smoke, odor, dust and dirt, noxious gases, glare and heat, transportation and traffic, and aesthetics. These issues are taken under consideration when reviewing industrial development plans.

Development and operation plans for industrial developments include descriptions of machinery, processes, and products, and specification for the mechanisms and techniques to be used to mitigate impacts from industrial operations. Proposals for industrial development must provide a complete characterization of activities, processes and waste management technologies to be utilized in the use's operation.

Table III-5
General Plan Industrial Development Potential

<u>Industrial Designation</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Estimated Square Footage (000s)*</u>
I-S (Service Industrial)	90	1,372
I-A (Agricultural Industrial)	4.4	67
I-L (Light Industrial)	178	2,713
I-M (Medium Industrial)	349	N/A
I-H (Heavy Industrial)	181	N/A
TOTALS	802.4	4,152

*Note: Assumes maximum permitted 35% site coverage. Addresses only undeveloped lands. I-M and I-H estimates of square footage inappropriate given extensive opportunities for outdoor storage and materials handling.

Industrial Development Trends

Currently (1989), the City has limited industrial development, which is centered primarily around agriculture, service and light industries. Several of these uses are inappropriately located, occurring along Hobsonway and conflicting with its predominantly commercial nature. Present levels of industrial development are characterized by cotton gins, packing sheds, pallet fabrication, and other agriculture related activities. Existing service and light industrial uses include welding and machine shops, bulk fuel storage, rail yards, equipment and materials storage yards, auto salvage. Some of these, including auto salvage, welding, and bulk fuel storage facilities, are incompatible with surrounding and planned uses.

Major transportation links which benefit the City and the region include U.S. Interstate-10 and the rail lines of the Santa Fe Rail Road. Other important transportation links include State Highway 78 (Neighbors Boulevard) and U.S. Highway 95 (Intake Boulevard), which link the Palo Verde Valley to southern and northern regions, respectively. These rail and roadway transportation systems provide the backbone for expanded industrial development. The Blythe Airport may also play an important role in enhancing the transportation options made available to current and future development.

The potential for substantial industrial development in the City will rest primarily on the availability of land and public services, the easy on/off access of Interstate-10 and Santa Fe railroad lines, a lack of nearby competing urban centers, and strategic location midway between the expanding major metropolitan areas of Los Angeles and Phoenix. The local agricultural base may offer some opportunity for food processing and/or packaging. Cotton related and other agri-business industries may also be expanded in the future.

Continued growth in the Palo Verde region will also encourage the development of small scale contracting, machining, welding, materials supplies and other light and service industrial development. Recent siting of major manufacturing facilities in the region indicates that the area can, with the right combination of incentives and promotion, attract major industrial development.

As discussed above, several factors including the location of major transportation facilities have influenced the designation of industrial lands on the General Plan land use map. Lands identified as particularly well suited for industrial uses include lands adjacent to Santa Fe rail lines, occurring south of Interstate-10 and in the vicinity of existing agricultural and other industrial uses. South Lovekin Boulevard is also ideally suited for various levels of industrial development, the heaviest industry being planned at locations most distant from the urban core.

While a broad range of industrial development is provided for, industrial development of significant size (approximately 10 acres or greater) should be conceived as master planned industrial parks. Industrial park development should set forth the various types and locations for industrial activities, establishes master development guidelines and provides for the master planning of roadway and infrastructure improvements.

INDUSTRIAL GOALS

1. To provide lands and facilities for expansion of industrial development, which will enhance and broaden the economic base of the City and the region.
2. To optimize the use of the interstate highway and rail systems passing through the City to the greatest extent possible, thereby building upon vital existing infrastructure and transportation systems.
3. To enhance industrial development and assure its compatible integration with other non-industrial land uses.

INDUSTRIAL POLICIES

1. The City should encourage the development of new industrial areas and the redevelopment of existing older or marginal industrial areas where appropriately designated on the Land Use Map of the General Plan.
2. The City shall consider the use of Redevelopment tax increment financing and other powers of the Redevelopment Agency to encourage the relocation of industrial developers and users into the City.
3. The City shall seek to attract industrial users for which the area is particularly well suited, and encourage those industries to take advantage of the local labor force.
4. The City shall make every effort to facilitate the relocation of inappropriately located industrial uses which are incompatible with surrounding existing or planned land uses.
5. The City shall require the undergrounding of utility service lines serving new development sites, and shall encourage same at proposed redevelopment sites.

6. Development proposed in each industrial land use category shall substantially comply with the types and intensities of uses as set forth for each land use designation.
7. All industrial sites shall be appropriately landscaped and all outdoor storage areas shall be screened from view from public rights-of-way and surrounding properties with a combination of fencing and landscaping.
8. Development proposed in each industrial land use category shall substantially comply with the types and intensities of uses as set forth for each land use designation.
9. The City shall prepare and implement zoning district performance standards which correspond with the industrial land use designations set forth in the General Plan.

INDUSTRIAL DESIGNATIONS

Service Industrial (I-S)

The **Service Industrial** designation of **I-S** provides for service and service industrial uses which represent the least intense industrial and quasi-industrial uses which are inappropriate for operation in commercial districts of the City. Service industrial uses include automotive and truck repair (not conducted in conjunction with retail fuel sales), light welding and machining operations, construction offices and storage, and wholesale distribution.

Agriculture Industrial (I-A)

The **Agriculture Industrial** designation of **I-A** provides for the development and operation of industrial and quasi-industrial uses which are directly or indirectly related to agricultural activities. Agriculture industrial uses include cotton ginning, packing facilities, bulk storage of fertilizers and other agricultural chemicals, farm equipment storage and service, pallet and packaging fabrication, and similar uses. Uses on these lands may be seasonal.

Light Industrial (I-L)

The **Light Industrial** designation of **I-L** provides for those industrial uses which comprise the majority of industrial activity occurring in the region. Light industrial uses are those which are relatively non-intensive in nature and which require limited amounts of outdoor storage. All industrial activities and operations shall occur entirely within enclosed buildings. The creation of nuisances such as noise, odor, dust, vibration and other potential impacts shall be mitigated to levels compatible with potential adjacent residential uses. Examples of light industrial uses include fabrication of lumber and wood products, wholesale distribution centers, business/industrial park development, contractor's storage yards, and non-agriculture equipment storage areas.

Medium Industrial

The **Medium Industrial** designation of **I-M** provides for industrial uses of moderate intensity which may be generators of objectionable levels of noise, smoke, dust, glare, traffic vibration or other nuisance which limits the use's compatibility with non-industrial uses. The medium industrial designation also provides for greater amounts of outdoor storage, which must be fully screened and maintained. Uses appropriate to this industrial designation include the manufacture of durable goods such as appliances, furniture, fabricated metal products, and electrical and transportation equipment.

Heavy Industrial

The **Heavy Industrial** designation of **I-H** provides for the most intense industrial development to be contemplated in the City. Uses associated with this designation may include slaughter houses, rendering plants, metals smelting and/or manufacturing, refining of oils and other flammable or hazardous materials, and other uses which may require extensive outdoor areas for storage or materials handling.

PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC LAND USES

Background

One of the principal concerns of local government is to assure the provision of adequate levels of public facilities and services. Institutional or Public/Quasi-Public land uses and facilities include water and sewer lines and pumping stations, electric substations and natural gas pumping and distribution systems, fire and police stations, schools and libraries, and hospitals. Municipal land uses including City Hall and various support facilities are also public/quasi public land uses.

The level of public and quasi-public services and facilities needed to support residential, commercial and industrial development and community needs is directly related to the intensity of urban development. The planned, logical extension of urban areas cannot occur without the careful planning for the extension of public facilities and services.

The economic life and future of the community and the vitality of the development environment is directly tied to the level of services, the types and intensities of land use, and the level of demand for services. The economic health of the community is also dependent upon a balance between service costs and revenues generated by current and future development which support these costs. While the extension of many urban services is provided by various public, and quasi-public departments and agencies, and regulated private companies, many of these service providers are not under the City's regulatory jurisdiction. Nonetheless, the City has the essential responsibility to coordinate these service extensions to assure that premature or inappropriate land uses are not encouraged.

The City maintains several institutional facilities, including City Hall and related City services and facilities, and four parks. Facilities of the Palo Verde Unified School District include three elementary schools, one junior high school, one high school, one junior college, one continuation school. The City of Blythe and the Palo Verde Unified School District presently (1988) employ approximately 475 persons. The Palo Verde Community College District employs approximately 60 persons.

City Government Buildings and Facilities

The City of Blythe provides police and fire protection services within the city limits. The police department is composed of 24 full-time employees, and 16 reserve officers. Police department facilities are adequate but at capacity at this time. The fire department is staffed by 28 trained volunteers and one fire marshal. The fire department operates 3 pumpers including a "telesquirt" pumper, and has a mutual aid agreement with the Riverside County Fire Department.

County Government Buildings and Facilities

The City also provides a regional base of operations for most of the Riverside County offices, including the County Sheriff's office, the District Attorney, local courts and other administrative services operations. The County anticipates the need for substantial future expansion of facilities in Blythe, and has been considering ways of expanding existing County administration and court facilities in the City. Riverside County presently employs approximately 120 persons in the Blythe area. There are indications that County employment could double over the next five years. The County and City have indicated that each is ready to participate in the development of a joint City/County regional administrative center.

Palo Verde Valley Hospital

The Palo Verde Valley Hospital is an important element of institutional development in the Valley and also an employment center, employing about 150 persons. The facility is a 55 bed privately owned community hospital with a newly completed emergency room. There are long-term plans to expand the facility to approximately 100 beds. Additional contiguous lands have been secured by the hospital, further expanding and enhancing the facility's expansion.

Parks

Public parks, and other open space areas not so designated, are also included in the Public/Quasi-Public land use designation. These are critical facilities which are representative of the community's character and values. The City has excellent park facilities which are discussed at length in the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan.

PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC GOALS

1. Public and quasi-public land uses shall be developed in a cost-effective and timely manner, and corresponding to the coherent and logical expansion of urban development.
2. Public and quasi-public land uses shall be harmoniously located in areas where their operation will not conflict with existing or planned surrounding development.

PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC POLICIES

1. The City shall continue to give priority to the provision of services and facilities designed to serve existing needs and to prevent the deterioration of existing levels of service.
2. Assure the optimal utilization of existing infrastructure and services to the maximum extent and encourage infilling and contiguous growth in existing urbanized areas.
3. The City shall coordinate and regulate the development of public/quasi-public land uses in a manner which assures the efficient provision of urban services while remaining compatible with surrounding existing and future land uses.
4. Capital and facility needs generated by new development shall be financed by new development, including impacts to plant and distribution facilities. The existing community shall not be inequitably burdened by increased taxes or by compromised levels of service to accommodate the needs of new development.
5. Promote cooperation and consolidation of overlapping services and facilities between governmental jurisdictions, both City and County, as a means of assure quality, cost-effectiveness and efficiency of service.
6. The City shall monitor and regulate growth so that the cumulative demand for all services and facility capacities are assured of operating within optimum levels.

PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC DESIGNATION

Public/Quasi-Public (P)

The **Public/Quasi-Public** designation of **P** is assigned to the broad range of public and quasi-public service providers and facilities occurring in the City. Public/quasi-public uses include public utility facilities, City sewage treatment facilities, City parks, hospital and school facilities, and similar types of services and facilities. The type of use or facility shall also be indicated by a symbol on the General Plan land use map.

OPEN SPACE LAND USES

Background

The City and region are the beneficiaries of important open space areas of aesthetic and recreational value. These open space areas constitute a critically important part of the rural community environment. Primary open space areas within the General Plan study area occur along the Colorado River and the Palo Verde Mesa. Remnant meanders of the Colorado River, now functioning as agricultural drainage sloughs, also offer important open space resource areas. These lands provide opportunities for the City's residents to enjoy the outdoors for its recreational, aesthetic, ecological and scenic values. Open space lands may also include mineral resources, as well as important historic or prehistoric cultural sites.

Lands designated as Open Space on the General Plan are frequently important recreation resource areas such as lands along the Colorado River. While permanent residential development is not permitted on Open Space lands due to their sensitivity or to potential hazards, recreational vehicle park and camping facilities may be appropriate in some areas. Along the river, these facilities may include boat launches, marinas, and convenience commercial uses.

Open spaces may also constitute lands which pose health and safety threats, including but not limited to areas requiring special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions, such as unstable soils, flood plains, watersheds, sensitive biological resource areas, irrigation canals and agricultural and domestic water storage reservoirs, and other sensitive areas. Many of the sensitive and important resource areas are in agriculture and are addressed through the application of the Agricultural Reserve designation (see below).

Open space areas are also provided through City and County park facilities. These, however, are publicly owned and maintained facilities which are more appropriately designated as Public/Quasi-Public land uses on the General Plan. In keeping with the predominant rural residential character of the community, the prevention of premature development and sprawling urbanization should be an important policy to assure the protection of the open areas surrounding the City.

Open space areas are also important candidates for revitalization and enhancement, especially along the Colorado River and within agricultural sloughs. The City can play an important role in consulting and coordinating with the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to enhance valuable habitat and regional wildlife resources.

OPEN SPACE GOALS

1. To conserve, protect and manage open space areas in order to assure continued availability of environmental resources, guard against environmental hazards, provide enhanced recreational opportunities, and create an aesthetic character for the City.
2. To preserve the aesthetic, recreational and biological resource value of the Colorado River and desert resource areas, recognizing these areas as vital long-term open space resources for the City.

OPEN SPACE POLICIES

1. Permanent residential development shall not be permitted on lands designated as Open Space on the General Plan, with the exception of caretaker facilities which shall be limited to one dwelling unit per development.

2. The City shall permit the development of commercial recreational vehicle park and/or camping facilities to the extent that such uses do not conflict with the primary conservation goals of the Open Space Element of the General Plan.
3. Areas with particularly sensitive or important biological habitat and resources shall be protected from disturbance and development. Such areas shall be promoted by the City for protection and funding by state and federal agencies.
4. The City shall consult and coordinate with appropriate state and federal agencies to assure the maintenance of proper Colorado River water levels, to protect the biological and recreational resources of the river.
5. Promote the wise and conscientious use of river back-water, sloughs and other riparian habitat areas which will enhance the water fowl habitat and sport hunting potential.

OPEN SPACE DESIGNATION

Open Space (O-S)

The **Open Space** designation of **O-S** is assigned to those lands which constitute a special, important or valuable natural resource which warrant protection. These special resource areas may also pose hazards to development, which may also support their placement in the Open Space category. Lands important for their recreational, biological or regional economic value are also candidates for inclusion in this category.

AGRICULTURAL RESERVE LAND USES

Background

Agricultural land uses constitute the earliest economic activity in the Palo Verde Valley, and have been the backbone of the local economy for more than eight decades. The Palo Verde Valley is the third largest agricultural area in Riverside County, after Alessandro Valley (in the western portion of the County), and the Coachella Valley. As shown in the comparison chart below, the agricultural economy throughout the County has not experienced growth in the last five years, and has, in some instances, lost ground. The trend in the County as a whole, and the Palo Verde Valley in particular, has been a decrease in overall crop value, with a modest gain in 1987.

Principal Crops

Crops cultivated in the Palo Verde Valley, which constitute the bulk dollar value of production (1987), include alfalfa hay (15.2%), cotton (18.8%), lettuce (27.3%), cantaloupe (6.5%), and grains (2.7%). Total value of agricultural production in 1987 was \$118,956,200. resulting from the cultivation of a total of 128,198 acres.

As shown above, the single largest dollar value crop in the Palo Verde in 1987 was lettuce, followed by cotton and alfalfa hay. As shown below, the per unit cost of these crops has fluctuated greatly since 1980. Alfalfa in particular did not follow the overall trend in 1985, 1986 or in 1987, and lost value for the third year in a row. As is shown in the second chart below, individual crops vary greatly in value, and may not necessarily be profitable in an overall good year.

Agricultural Sector Stability

Seemingly random increases and decreases in farm prices cannot be controlled by Valley farmers, but are instead controlled by natural, economic and political events in other parts of the country and the world. This makes economic forecasting in the agricultural sector difficult, if not impossible. Certain facts are unavoidable, however. The ever increasing number of small farms which will be bought by corporate entities will continue to make it difficult for the small farmer to survive economically, and will reduce the number of small farmers to an even smaller number than that existing today.

Increasing urbanization of the countryside in Blythe and elsewhere, will further decrease the total amount of land cultivated. As development continues in Blythe, land currently used for agriculture will be converted to residential, commercial or industrial development.

Future Agricultural Development

The agricultural core of the Valley surrounding the City has been unaffected by urban development during the past 30 years, and is likely to remain rural for many years to come. It is unlikely, however, that large expansion efforts will occur in this area, at least in the short-term. The City expects to maintain its agricultural backdrop, and should make every effort to support farming interests in the area. With the lower value of the dollar, U.S. farmers, including those in the Palo Verde Valley, will see the opening of new markets for U.S. farm products.

Furthermore, as discussed earlier in this report, the City must broaden and diversify its economic base, in order to avoid the potentially devastating effects of a sector-specific recession. While this may imply the cultivation of light industrial and commercial development, agriculture will continue to be an important sector of the local economy.

AGRICULTURAL RESERVE GOALS

1. To preserve and protect agricultural lands from premature or inappropriate intrusion of urban or other adverse land uses, which threaten the long-term viability of agricultural activities.
2. Assure the thoughtful integration of agricultural lands with other land uses, assuring that these lands will continue to provide open space relief from the urban development of the City.

AGRICULTURAL RESERVE POLICIES

1. The City shall protect agricultural lands from premature development by assuring the logical and coherent expansion of urban development in the City.
2. The City shall encourage the continuation of agricultural activity on undeveloped land as a method of assuring their on-going use and function as rural open space areas.
3. Every effort shall be made to properly integrate and accommodate agricultural infrastructure including irrigation and drainage canals and agricultural buildings.
4. To assure the financial viability of cultivation on agricultural lands, the City shall encourage the use of Williamson Act contracts and other forms of property tax relief.
5. Preservation of agricultural lands and prime soils in non-urban areas shall be fostered in order to retain the viability of the groundwater aquifer which serves the City.
6. The use of agricultural chemical shall be conducted in a manner consistent with and respectful of surrounding agriculture and urban land uses.

AGRICULTURAL RESERVE DESIGNATION

Agricultural Reserve (A-R)

The **Agricultural Reserve** designation of **A-R** is assigned to lands which are in active or potentially active cultivation, and which are sufficiently removed from urban development to warrant protection and preservation. These lands are generally comprised of larger holdings which make on-going cultivation viable. This designation also may be assigned to areas where farm structures and residences occur, but is not applicable to agriculture-related industrial land uses.

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

Background

As defined in the General Plan, the Circulation Element addresses issues associated with the movement of people and goods, and is an essential requirement to economic, cultural, and technological development in any area. The population of the Southern California region, which includes Blythe, displays a distinct behavior with respect to travel demand and modal use. Private automobile ownership and travel demand have grown with increasing personal income. Regionally, as private automobile trips have increased, trips by other modes of transportation have decreased.

The steady increase of private and commercial traffic instigated the construction of U.S. Interstate-10 in the 1970s. As a consequence, the City of Blythe has emerged and broadened from a primarily agriculture-based economy to one which also provides essential tourist/traveler commercial services. Interstate-10 has also opened up greater access to the Colorado River and desert resource areas and has attracted users from both the greater Los Angeles and Phoenix metropolitan areas. In addition to attracted traffic generated by tourist/traveler commercial development, the development of new major employment centers (Chuckawalla State Prison) and induced growth will significantly increase traffic demands on community roadways.

Purpose and Methodology

Purpose

The purpose of the Circulation Element of the Blythe General Plan is to develop a comprehensive strategy consistent with regional plans and local needs to retain and improve mobility. This comprehensive strategy combines job/housing balance, transportation demand management, transportation systems management and facilities management.

Methodology

The Circulation Element represents a comprehensive transportation management strategy, which has been developed based upon an analysis of existing conditions and future development as set forth by the General Plan Land Use Map (see Land Use Element). The analysis utilized the Traffic Analysis Computer Software (TRACS). TRACS is a computer program that assists circulation analyses of land development traffic impacts. The program works directly with existing traffic volumes and existing street geometries as its starting point. Twenty intersections were identified for analysis. Existing AM and PM peak period traffic count data was collected on typical weekdays in March and April 1988.

Data was generated on traffic generated from the land use pattern presented in the General Plan applying trip generation rates for each land use category and adding projected to existing traffic counts. Traffic distribution parameters and travel paths were then established. Land development estimates were provided for thirteen (13) traffic analysis zones (TAZs) that covered the City Limits, Sphere-of-Influence and the General Plan Study Area.

Trip generation rates used were average rates extracted from Trip Generation: An Informational Report, Fourth Edition prepared by the Institute of Transportation Engineers. The average daily and peak period inbound and outbound trip generation rates are documented in Table III-6. Distribution parameters and travel paths identify the directional orientation and actual routes chosen by drivers to complete trips. This information was developed based on existing documented traffic patterns.

Table III-6
Trip Generation Rates¹

Land Use	ADT	PM (IN)	PM (OUT)	Comment
R-R (Residential Reserve)	10.062	0.633	0.371	Single Family
R-L (Low Density Res.)	5.857	0.375	0.185	Multi-Family
R-M (Medium Density Res.)	"	"	"	"
R-H (High Density Res.)	"	"	"	"
C-G (General Commercial)	40.675	2.402	2.402	per 1,000 Sq. Ft.
C-O (Office Commercial)	195.56	3.598	20.394	per 1,000 Sq. Ft.
C-N (NeighborHood Comm.)	"	"	"	"
C-T (Tourist Commercial)	"	"	"	"
I-S (Service Industrial)	6.967	0.124	0.912	"
I-A (Ag. Industrial)	"	"	"	"
I-L (Light Industrial)	"	"	"	"
I-M (Medium Industrial)	6.969	0.204	0.767	"
I-H (High Industrial)	"	"	"	"
P/QP (Public/Quasi-Public)	25.00	0.885	1.971	"
O-S (Open Space)	1.00	0	0	per acre
A-R (Ag. Reserve)	1.00	0	0	per acre ²

1. Source: Trip Generation: Fourth Edition. Institute of Transportation Engineers. 1987

2. Arbitrary trip generation rate. Should be considered conservative.

Levels of Service

As the City continues to grow, transportation demand management and systems management will be necessary to preserve and increase available roadway "capacity". Capacity is a term used to define the number of vehicles that may pass over a section of roadway in a given time period under the prevailing roadway and traffic conditions. On urban roadways, capacities are most restricted by intersection operations.

The available and utilized capacity of a roadway is typically characterized as "level of service". Levels of Service (LOS) are a range of alphabetical connotations "A" through "F", used to characterize roadway operating conditions. LOS A represents best/free flow

conditions and LOS F indicates worst/system failure. Levels of service are represented as volume to capacity ratios, or vehicle demand divided by roadway capacity, therefore, as the ratio approaches 1.00 the roadway approaches LOS F. Added travel lanes increase capacity, as does the inclusion of a raised median on a roadway. Raised medians increase roadway capacity by reducing the number of vehicle conflicting points and improving traffic flow.

LOS D and/or a maximum volume to capacity ratio of 0.90 is considered the minimum acceptable service level. Traffic mitigation/improvement projects were developed to maintain a minimum LOS D forecast peak period operation for the buildout of the General Plan Land Use Element.

Exhibit III-1 describes the various capacity values assigned for various roadway sizes and levels of service, and also illustrates traffic conditions associated with the respective LOS value. LOS "C" is the desirable and optimal level of traffic volume on any given roadway. As noted in Exhibit III-1, the inclusion of a raised median on a roadway (divided vs. undivided) increases the roadway carrying capacity significantly. This increased capacity is provided by decreasing the number of vehicle conflict points, thereby improving traffic flow.

Exhibit III-1
LEVEL OF SERVICE VOLUMES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

LEVEL OF SERVICE VOLUMES/CAPACITY VALUES

(Average Daily Trips - ADT)

TYPE OF ROADWAY	LOS A	LOS B	LOS C	LOS D	LOS E
6 LANES DIVIDED	36,000	40,400	45,000	49,500	54,000
6 LANES UNDIVIDED	24,000	27,000	30,000	33,000	36,000
4 LANES DIVIDED	24,000	27,000	30,000	33,000	36,000
4 LANES UNDIVIDED	16,000	18,000	20,000	22,000	24,000
2 LANES UNDIVIDED	5,000	7,500	10,000	12,500	15,000

Note: Capacity values can be increased while maintaining a Level of Service "C" through the use of strict access controls and additional design measures to reduce vehicle conflict points.

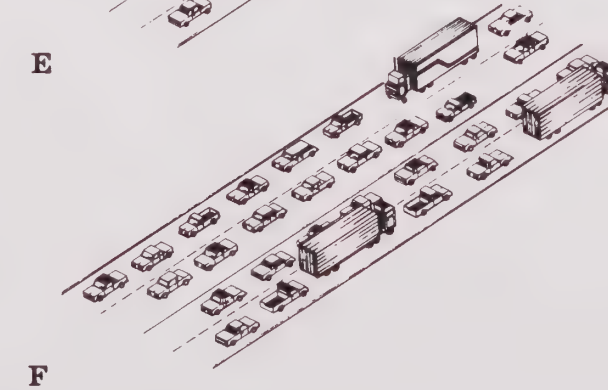
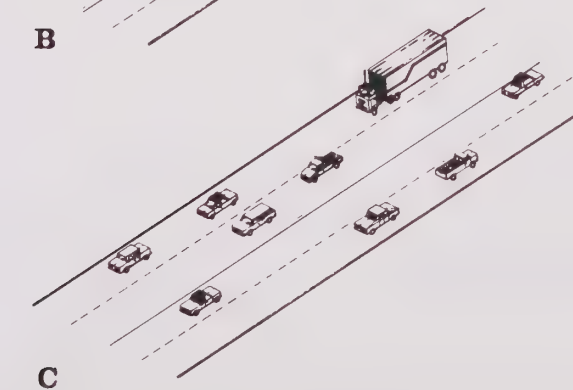
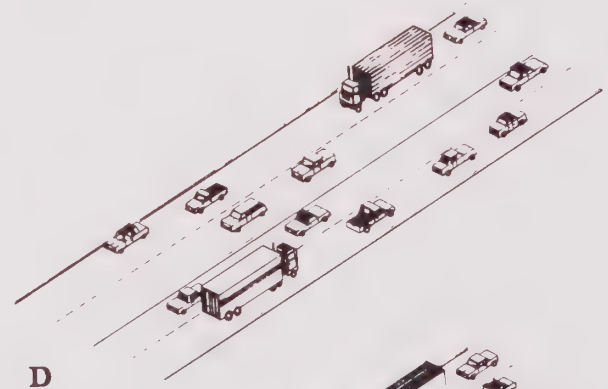
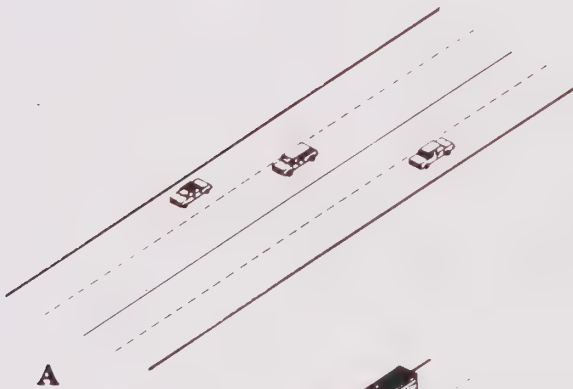
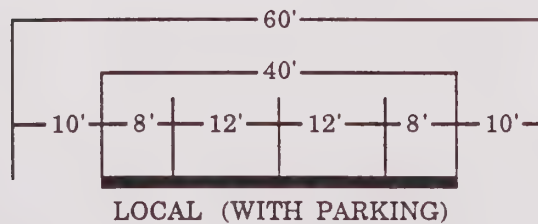
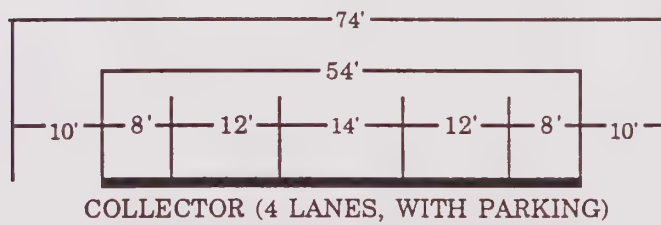
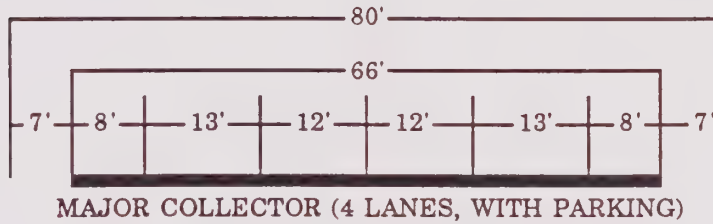
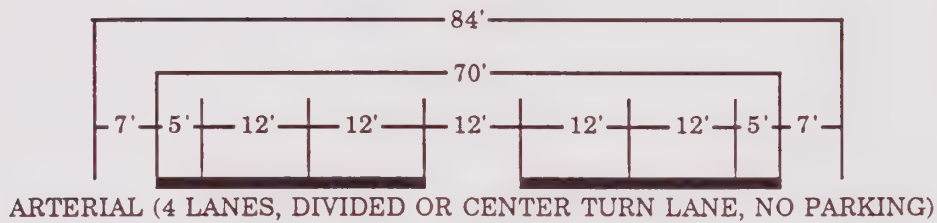
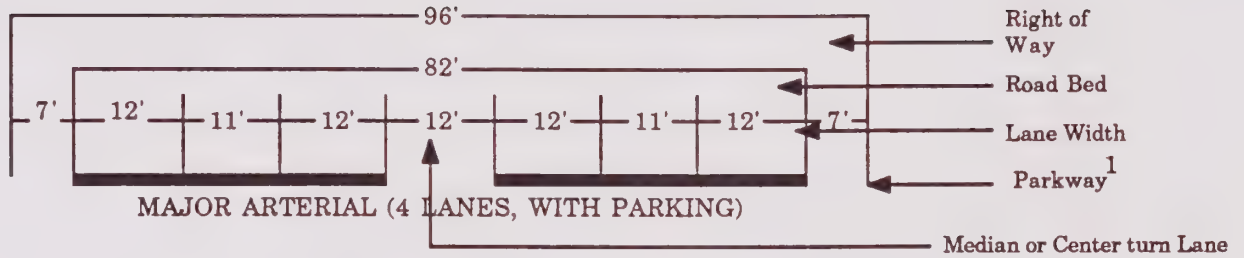
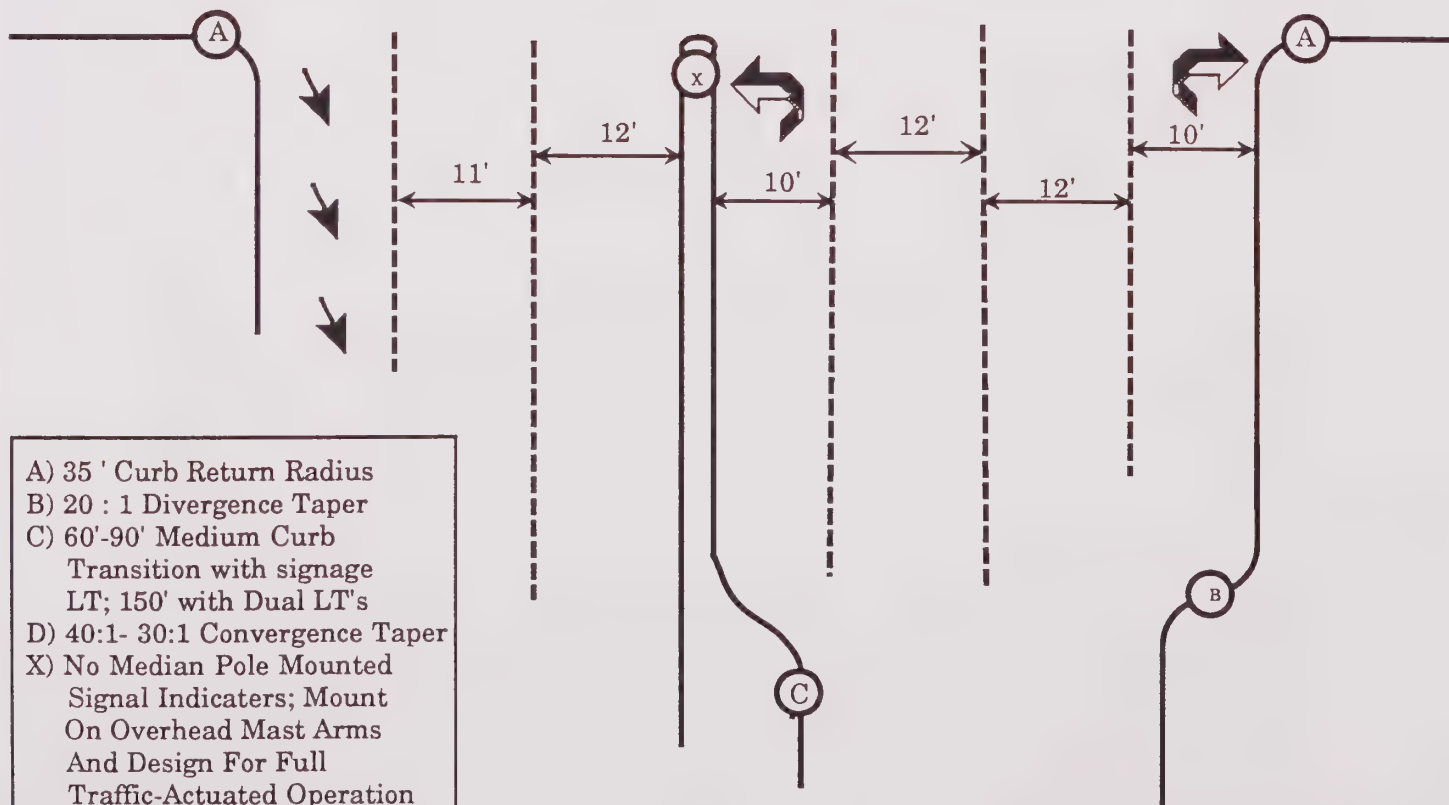
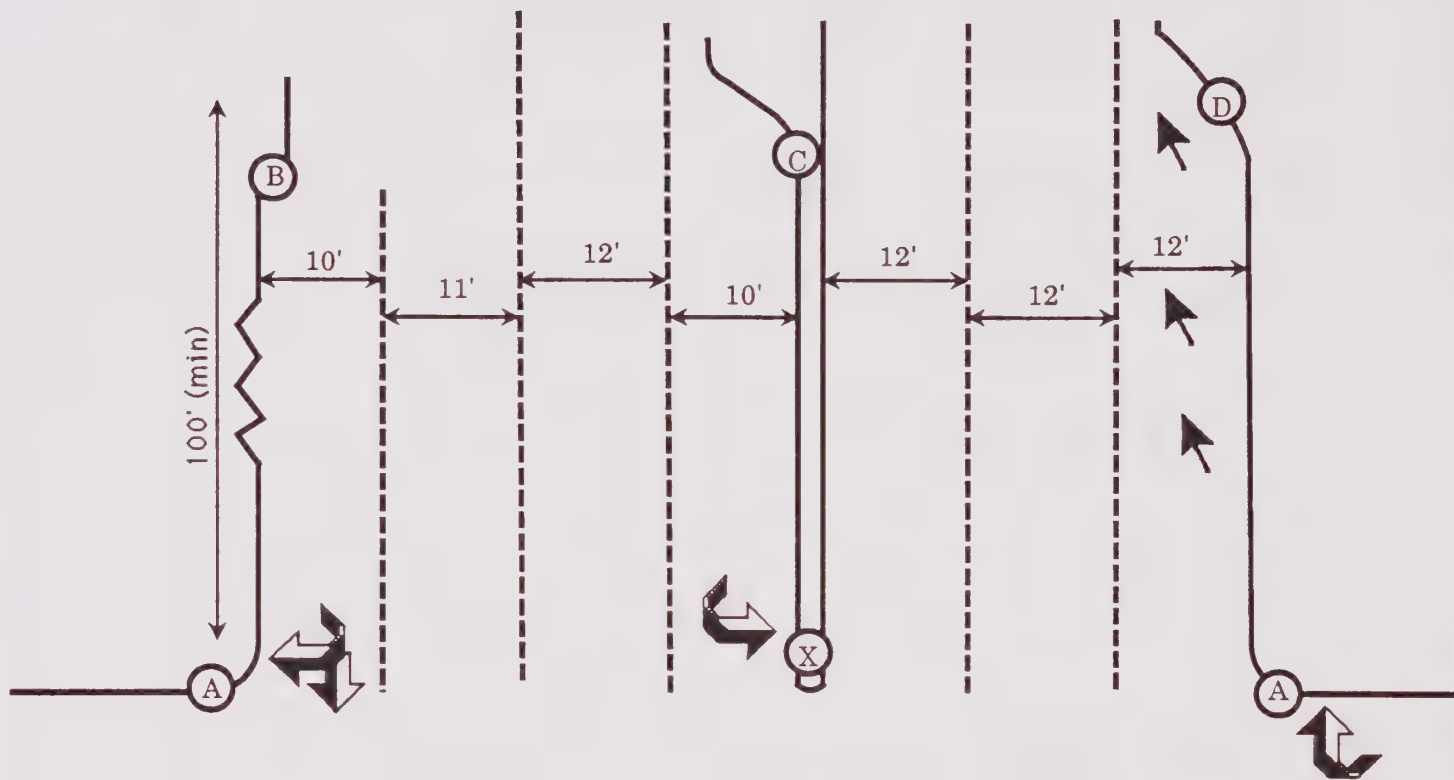


EXHIBIT III-2
STREET SECTIONS
(Typical Dimensions)



¹ Parkway provides for three foot planting buffer and four foot sidewalks. Assumes provision of five foot utility easement behind sidewalk.

EXHIBIT III - 3
LANE TRANSITION STANDARDS



- A) 35' Curb Return Radius
- B) 20 : 1 Divergence Taper
- C) 60'-90' Medium Curb Transition with signage LT; 150' with Dual LT's
- D) 40:1- 30:1 Convergence Taper
- X) No Median Pole Mounted Signal Indicators; Mount On Overhead Mast Arms And Design For Full Traffic-Actuated Operation

The Circulation Element of the General Plan, in addition to prescribing the general location and extent of existing and planned major roadways and intersections, also addresses other major transportation routes and facilities including airports, rail lines, and facilities for the transport of goods and materials, energy, water, sewage wastes, storm drains and communications.

This element is an essential generator of development patterns, and can affect environmental noise levels, community appearance and other areas of environmental concern. The Circulation Element supports the goals, policies and programs of the Land Use Element. The Circulation Element also has direct relationships with the housing, open space, noise and safety elements.

As one of the primary determinants of the pattern of urban development, the General Plan circulation system includes all of the existing and planned major roadways in the City, the Sphere-of-Influence, and the General Plan Study Area, ranging from major arterial roadways to local streets. Those areas where no new major roadways have been planned shall be addressed through the preparation of master circulation plans as part of Specific Plans of Land Use. These areas are largely limited to development west of Defrain Boulevard, but may also apply to incorporated lands or those to be annexed into the City.

Current Conditions

The development of the General Plan Circulation Element is the result of extensive traffic data collection, analysis of existing street geometries, and identification of near-term issues of concern. It is also based upon the levels of traffic expected to result from the build-out of the General Plan land use plan. As indicated by research, and as is commonly the case, intersections are generally the most constrained locations within the local street system, therefore, service levels at intersections are of the greatest concern.

An analysis of the twenty (20) major intersections indicated that all are operating at LOS A (1988). The worst operating intersection, Lovekin/Hobsonway, has a PM peak hour volume to capacity ratio of 0.45, still within LOS A (LOS B starts at 0.61). At this time, none of the non-signalized intersections are sufficiently impacted to warrant signalization.

Vehicle classification and occupancy data (1988) indicates that approximately 93% of the existing traffic demand is comprised of automobiles/vans, 4% light-duty trucks, 3% heavy duty trucks, and less than 1% motorcycles. The average vehicle occupancy of 1.62 persons is higher than the regional average, and is even higher than the regional objective. This high average vehicle ridership is in part related to the traveler trips attracted from Interstate-10.

Issues of Concern

Several areas of concern were identified in the General Plan circulation analysis. They include conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, freeway access lanes and pavement legends, signage, on-street parking, and the varying widths of improved streets and limits on enhancing capacities at these streets. The following briefly describes issues which shall be addressed in the General Plan policies.

- Pedestrian crossings are indicated with raised pavement markers at several midblock segments. Such midblock pedestrian crossings may create a false sense of security for pedestrians. Generally, it is considered best to limit designation of pedestrian crossings to signalized intersections.
- The securing of inadequate right-of-way prior to development has resulted in irregular paved widths, reduction in roadway capacities, and limitations on the long-term viability of road segments. Every effort should be made to enhance roadway capacities on those streets where development has provided for inadequate road widths.
- Consideration should be given to an upgraded street name signing program, with illuminated street name signs at signalized intersections. Advance signing should be considered for placement about 400 feet prior to major intersections.

General Plan Traffic Generation

The General Plan circulation system has been developed based upon projected street traffic conditions based upon the estimated number of trips generated by existing and planned land uses and their distribution. Projections are also based upon the mix of available transportation modes (passenger cars, van pools, etc.), and estimated impacts of projected traffic volumes on existing and planned street capacities, and on Trip Generation: An Informational Report, Fourth Edition, Institute of Transportation Engineers.

LOS C, which implies good traffic operation with stable flow and occasional delays at intersections, is used as the standard to identify existing and future circulation problem areas. The circulation system within the City has been assigned a capacity designation ranging from Local Streets (60' R/W), to Major Arterial Highways (110' R/W). Design capacities of the City's roads range from 10,000 to 30,000 average daily trips (ADT).

Buildout of the City's circulation network will require multi-jurisdictional and regional participation efforts. Improvements to State Highway 95 (Intake Boulevard), State Highway 78 (Neighbors Boulevard) and Interstate 10 will require regional CalTrans participation. Improvements to City roads which extend into the County's jurisdiction must also be coordinated with the Riverside County Road Department to provide roadway capacity improvements.

The City General Plan Study Area has been divided into thirteen (13) separate Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs). Each TAZ has been analysed for the amount of developed and undeveloped acreage under each land use category. Traffic generation within each TAZ is projected and traffic impacts are distributed onto the appropriate segments of the City roadway system. Table III-7 also addresses major roadway segments, and includes the following information:

- A. Major Roadway Segment.
- B. 1988 Average Daily Trips (ADT).
- C. General Plan Roadway Designation.
- D. General Plan Average Daily Trips.

The following Table III-7 summarizes the results of this analysis.

Table: III-7
General Plan Road Analysis

Roadway Segment	1988 ADT	General Plan Designation	General Plan Buildout (ADT)
Lovekin Blvd. (N of Chanslor Way)	3110	Arterial	30,000
Lovekin Blvd. (N of I-10)	7550	Arterial	44,000
Lovekin Blvd. (S of I-10)	5070	Arterial	40,000
Broadway (N of Hobsonway)	3370	M. Collector	6,000
Broadway (S of Hobsonway)	3600	M. Collector	10,000
7th Street (N of Chanslor Way)	1270	Arterial	30,000
7th Street (S of Barnard Street)	3170	Arterial	34,000
7th Street (S of Hobsonway)	4910	Arterial	32,000
7th Street (S of I-10)	2670	Arterial	25,000
Intake Blvd. (N of Chanslor Way)	2820	Arterial	42,000
Intake Blvd. (N of Hobsonway)	2900	Arterial	51,000
Intake Blvd. (S of Hobsonway)	3170	Arterial	52,000
Intake Blvd. (S of I-10)	1200	Arterial	31,000
10th Avenue (E of Lovekin Blvd.)	740	M. Collector	34,000
10th Avenue (E of 7th Street)	580	M. Collector	31,000
Chanslor Way (W of Lovekin Blvd.)	1040	M. Collector	26,000
Chanslor Way (E of Lovekin Blvd.)	2430	M. Collector	34,000
Chanslor Way (E of 7th Street)	2770	M. Collector	24,500
Barnard Street (W of Lovekin Blvd.)	1330	Collector	13,000
Barnard Street (E of Lovekin Blvd.)	2490	Local	5,000
Barnard Street (E of 7th Street)	1600	Local	5,000
Hobsonway (W of Lovekin Blvd.)	5470	Arterial	48,000
Hobsonway (E of Lovekin)	10730	Arterial	30,000
Hobsonway (E of Broadway)	12230	Arterial	37,000
Hobsonway (E of 7th Street)	8020	Arterial	31,000
Hobsonway (E of Intake Blvd.)	1790	Arterial	61,000
14th Avenue (E of Lovekin Blvd.)	2230	M. Collector	38,000
14th Avenue (E of 7th Street)	1790	Arterial	37,000

Notes: LOS C capacities increased or decreased depending upon the availability of additional right-of-way to provide full width. Limited and restricted access shall also enhance capacity.

Transportation Demand Management

Transportation demand management techniques are widely used to extend or preserve capacity on existing roadways. These techniques may include efforts to consolidate person trips into fewer vehicle trips through the encouragement of car or van-pooling, or special intersection design that includes right turn overlap signal phasing to provide free right turns whenever possible. By minimizing the number of intersections and driveways along important roadways, and other techniques, roadway capacity can be preserved and enhanced.

Truck Route Analysis

As the backbone of the regional and interregional circulation system, Interstate-10 plays an important role in conveying truck traffic into and through the City. Trailer rigs have increased in size and may not be appropriate for most City streets. The effects of trucks on capacity and service volumes are documented in the Institute of Transportation Engineers Transportation and Traffic Engineering Handbook. A series of adjustment factors (applied to capacity/service volumes) quantify the effects of varying conditions and percentages of trucks. For instance, for roadway grades of less than 2% and traffic composition of 5% trucks, an adjustment factor of 0.95 results. This means that trucks will reduce the roadway's overall capacity by one percent for every one percent of traffic comprised of trucks.

Parking Facilities

While many of the newer commercial developments in the City have been able to provide adequate parking to serve their customers, older development is frequently incapable of providing off-street parking adequate to meet its needs. This problem is particularly evident along Hobsonway in the commercial core area. Many businesses now depend upon on-street parking to provide for their patrons' needs. Some of the on-street parking facilities are diagonal spaces which require departing traffic to back out into on-coming traffic. The City Redevelopment Agency has initiated a Redevelopment Plan which includes plans to construct City public parking facilities, in addition to those already made available, as a means of addressing the needs of older commercial development. It is essential, however, that new development be required to provide adequate parking on-site to meet the parking demand generated by the development.

Railway Facilities

The City and region benefit from the availability of major transportation links, including the Santa Fe Railroad lines. Currently, the rail traffic on these lines averages approximately two trains per day, one out-bound and one in-bound per day. While trucking provides the bulk of hauling services supporting agriculture and other business activities in the City, rail lines do deliver bulk lumber and other materials, and load agricultural products at facilities located along rail sidings immediately adjacent to the Santa Fe rail lines passing through the City.

These rail facilities are important transportation links which provide a great opportunity for substantial rail oriented industrial development to occur. Rail lines are shown on the General Plan Map and policies have been developed to assure their preservation and enhanced utilization. There is no passenger service available from railway facilities located in the City. One issue identified involves the two closely spaced railroad crossings at Lovekin Boulevard and 18th Avenue. Realignment (to the south) of 18th Avenue as it approaches Lovekin Boulevard would eliminate one of these closely spaced railroad crossings.

Airport Facilities

The Blythe County Airport is located in the extreme western portion of the General Plan Study Area and provides important, primarily general aviation services. The region is serviced under the Essential Airports Service Subsidy Program. The Blythe Airport also provides commuter passenger service to Los Angeles, Ontario, Bullhead City and Phoenix. The airport consists of two operating runways, 6,500 feet and 5,800 feet long. Two additional runways are presently closed but are planned for future improvement and use.

The airport has approximately 24,000 operations per year. Plans for industrial development at the airport and growing agricultural exports, particularly lettuce and melons, may create a demand for domestic and international air freight services. Capacities on roadways serving the airport should be preserved and enhanced to assure the viability of airport facilities for future utilization and development.

Utility Corridors

The Circulation Element also plays an important role in assuring the planned provision of major corridors and easements for the transport of natural gas, electricity, communication lines, domestic water and sewage lines, and storm drainage. In many instances the need for utility easements is met through the provision of easements in or adjacent to City streets and alleys, and along common lot lines.

The planning of future land use and the processing of development applications requires communication and coordination with utility companies and other service providers to assure the provision of easements and rights-of-way for the extension of roads and utility lines and services.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Due to the modest size of the City and the relatively low traffic levels on most City streets, both pedestrians and bicyclists enjoy the safe use of streets and sidewalks for alternatives to vehicular transport. Both walking and bicycling are widely utilized in the City and the continued integration of sidewalks and bicycle lanes into roadway designs will assure the continued use of these modes of transportation. Combination sidewalk/bikeways require an eight foot width. On-street bikeways require a minimum four foot width, and should not be combined with on-street parking.

Land Use Traffic Forecasts

Traffic conditions were forecast for the General Plan. At buildout, the land use plan is forecast to generate 282,000 new average daily trips, with 32,700 taking place during the evening peak hours.

Unacceptable service levels (LOS F) are forecast for all 20 intersections if no mitigation projects were planned and completed in a timely manner. Average daily trip forecasts for the land use plan are shown in Table III-7, General Plan Road Analysis. The analysis is based upon the average daily trips for completed buildout. The land use plan defers the analysis of impacts from those lands designated Urban Reserve (U-R) on the General Plan Land Use Map(s) to such time as a Specific Plan of Land Use shall be required prior to any development.

TRAFFIC IMPACT MITIGATION PROGRAMS

While some of the following policies originate from the South Coast Air Quality District and apply primarily to the South Coast Air Basin, AQMD has indicated that every effort should be made on the part of the City to comply with these policies. A comprehensive strategy combining jobs/housing balance, transportation demand management, transportation system management and facilities development has been prepared so that acceptable traffic service levels will be maintained in the Blythe area. This strategy is presented in the form of goals, measurable objectives, and specific policies.

Jobs/Housing Balance Goal: To locate jobs and housing near each other to produce shorter work commutes.

Objective 1.0 Provide an average distance for home-work commutes of less than the 10.72 mile region-wide average, and increase working at home and telecommunications to involve 20% of the areas workforce

Policy 1.1 The City shall encourage mixed-use development where employment and residential opportunities are made available.

Policy 1.2 The City shall adopt or maintain a home occupation ordinance to permit people to work at home.

Policy 1.3 The City shall encourage major employers to evaluate telecommuting, either home-based or at local centers, for at least part-time options for employees.

Transportation Demand Management Goal: To promote the use of non-single occupant modes of transportation, and to shift trips out of current peak periods.

Objective 2.0 Provide an information network among employers and provide technical assistance to develop rideshare programs compatible with requirements of Regulation XV of the Air Quality Management District.

Policy 2.1 The City shall, as appropriate, prepare a rideshare plan for its employees to serve as an example for area employers. This plan shall include preferential parking for high-occupancy vehicles, and meaningful incentives for employees to walk, bike, or rideshare to complete their work commutes.

Policy 2.2 The City shall, as appropriate, organize a Transportation Management Organization among employers to provide an ongoing information network, and to determine opportunities for transit/shuttle operations.

Objective 3.0 The City shall encourage employers to provide alternative work weeks and flextime sufficient to reduce peak period trips by 10%.

Policy 3.1 The City shall encourage employers to provide 4 day-40 hour and 9 day-80 hour work weeks, and/or provide start/end times outside of the 6-8 a.m. and 4-6 p.m. peak periods of traffic.

Objective 4.0 The City shall encourage and develop continuous and convenient bicycle routes to places of employment, shopping centers, schools, and other high activity areas with potential for increased bicycle use.

Policy 4.1 The City shall prepare and adopt a Master Plan of Bikeways, and develop secure bicycle storage facilities and other support facilities which increase bicycle use.

Objective 5.0 The City shall preserve and encourage the use of existing major railroad lines, spurs, sidings and terminals for the exchange and conveyance of goods and materials.

Objective 6.0 The City shall coordinate airport and ground transportation by encouraging plans which ensure compatible development, with public transportation as the preferred principal means of ground transportation access (e.g., intercity bus access to airport).

Transportation System Management Goal: To increase capacity and improve performance of the existing roadway system with relatively inexpensive projects.

Objective 7.0 The City shall coordinate with CalTrans to install freeway onramp meters, including high occupancy vehicle bypass lanes at all freeway interchanges.

Objective 8.0 The City shall develop an incident management program to communicate to motorists that traffic incidents can be reported toll-free from cellular car phones, and to have emergency tow-truck contractors throughout the area.

Objective 9.0 The City shall have all future signals designed for inter-connected, traffic-actuated operation.

Facilities Development Goal: Expand and enhance the existing roadway system to provide acceptable LOS D peak period operation for existing plus forecast traffic for buildout of the General Plan.

Objective 10.0 Design and construct roadway improvement projects, outlined below, to the typical cross section standards shown in Exhibit III-2 and to the transition standards illustrated in Exhibit III-3. These improvements illustrated on the General Plan Land Use Map will be phased with land development to maintain acceptable service levels (not worse than LOS D during peak periods), and presume signalization as warrants are met. Also presumed is that where raised medians are provided, median openings will be limited to a minimum 400 foot separation; and that driveway curb cuts along arterials will have a minimum 200 foot separation wherever possible. Development will participate equitably to conform with AB 1600.

PROGRAM OF ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

I. INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

A Lovekin Boulevard/16th Avenue Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.
4. Westbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.

B. Lovekin Boulevard/14th Avenue

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.
4. Westbound approach with one left turn pocket, one through lane, and one right-turn-only lane.

C. Lovekin Boulevard/I-10 East Ramps/Donlon Intersection

1. Northbound approach with two lanes.
2. Southbound approach with dual left turn pockets and two through lanes.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket, one shared left/through lane, and one right-turn-only lane.
4. Cul-de-sac Donlon west of Solano and Solano south of Donlon to improve offramp operations.

D. Lovekin Boulevard/I-10 West Ramps/Dekema Intersection

1. Northbound approach with dual left turn pockets and two through lanes.

2. Southbound approach with two through lanes.
3. Westbound approach (offramp) with one left turn pocket, one shared left/right, and one right turn only lane.
4. Cul-de-sac Dekema west of Willow Street.

E. Lovekin Boulevard/Hobsonway Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket, two exclusive through lanes, and one combination through/right turn lane that transitions back into the second northbound lane about 400 feet north of the intersection.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket , two through lanes, and one right-turn-only lane.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket, two exclusive through lanes, and one combination through/right turn lane that transitions back into the second eastbound lane about 400 feet east of the intersection.
4. Westbound approach with dual left turn pockets and two through lanes.

F. Lovekin Boulevard/Barnard Street Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lanes.
4. Westbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.

G. Lovekin Boulevard/Chanslor Way Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
4. Westbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.

H. Lovekin Boulevard/10th Avenue Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
4. Westbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.

I. Broadway/14th Avenue Intersection

1. Provide a second westbound left turn pocket.

J. Broadway/Hobsonway Intersection

1. Provide a second westbound left turn lane.

K. Broadway/Barnard Street Intersection

1. Provide northbound and southbound separate left turn pockets.

L. Broadway/Chanslor Way Intersection

1. Provide northbound and southbound separate left turn pockets.

M. Seventh Street/14th Avenue Intersection (Realignment)

1. Realign Seventh Street east of canal between I-10 and 14th Avenue and provide frontage road via existing Seventh Street for numerous residential driveways along this section.
2. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
3. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes
4. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
5. Westbound approach with one left turn pocket, two through lanes, and one right-turn-only lane.

N. Seventh Street/I-10 East Ramps/Donlon Intersection

1. As part of the realignment referenced in M.1., cul-de-sac the frontage road south of I-10 east offramp, and evaluate cul-de-sac for Sixth Street and Fifth Street south of Donlon to maintain residential neighborhood integrity.
2. Northbound approach with two northbound through lanes and one right-turn-only lane.
3. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
4. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket, one shared left/right lane, and one right-turn-only lane.

O. Seventh Street/I-10 West Ramps/Dekema Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
2. Southbound approach with two through lanes.
3. Westbound approach with two lanes.
4. Cul-de-sac Fifth Street, Fourth Street, Third Street and First Street north of Dekema Street to improve operation of the I-10 westbound onramp and of Dekema Street.

P. Seventh Street/Hobsonway Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket, two through lanes, and one right-turn-only lane.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
3. Eastbound approach with dual left turn pockets, two exclusive through lanes, and one combination through/right turn lane that transitions back into the second eastbound through lane about 400 feet east of the intersection.
4. Westbound approach with dual left turn pockets and two through lanes.

Q. Seventh Street/Barnard Street Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.
4. Westbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.

R. Seventh Street/Chanslor Way Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.
4. Westbound approach with one left turn pocket and one through lane.

S. Seventh Street/10th Avenue Intersection

1. All approaches with one left turn pocket and one through lane.

T. Intake Boulevard/I-10 East Ramps

1. Northbound approach with two through lanes.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket, one shared right/left turn lane, and one right-turn-only lane.

U. Intake Boulevard/I-10 West Ramps

1. Northbound approach with one left turn lane and two through lanes.
2. Southbound approach with two through lanes and one right-turn-only lane.

3. Westbound approach with one left turn lane and one "free" right-turn-only lane that transitions into the third northbound lane approaching Hobsonway.

V. Intake Boulevard/Hobsonway Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and three through lanes (see U.3.), with the third through lane transitioning back into the second lane about 400 feet north of the intersection.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and three through lanes, with the third through lane transitioning into the southbound right-turn-only lane into the I-10 westbound ramp.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket, two through lanes, and one right-turn-only lane.
4. Westbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.

W. Intake Boulevard/Barnard Street

1. Realign Agate Drive east of Intake north to align with the Barnard extension, and provide one left turn pocket and two through lanes on all approaches.

X. Intake Boulevard/Chanslor Way Intersection

1. Northbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
2. Southbound approach with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
3. Eastbound approach with one left turn pocket, one through lane, and one right-turn-only lane.
4. West bound approach with dual left turn pockets and one through lane.

Y. Intake Boulevard/11th Street Intersection

1. Northbound and southbound approaches each with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
2. Eastbound and westbound approaches with one left turn pocket and one through lane.

Z. Intake Boulevard/10th Street Intersection

1. Northbound and southbound approaches each with one left turn pocket and two through lanes.
2. Eastbound and westbound approaches each with one left turn pocket and one through lane.

II. MIDBLOCK ROADWAY CROSS-SECTION IMPROVEMENTS

- A. 18th Avenue: one lane in each direction, with center turn lane; realign east of Lovekin to eliminate one railway crossing.
- B. 16th Avenue: one lane in each direction, with center turn lane.
- C. 14th Avenue:
 - 1. One lane in each direction west of Lovekin, with center turn lane.
 - 2. Two lanes west bound between Broadway and Lovekin Boulevard, with one lane transitioning into the westbound right-turn-only lane at Lovekin Boulevard.
 - 3. Two lanes in each direction with median divider between Broadway and Intake.
 - 4. Extend as four lane divided facility east of Intake to the Olive Lake Drive extension, providing one-quarter mile separation between next signalized intersection to the north.
- D. Hobsonway: two lanes in each direction with median divider.
- E. Barnard Street:
 - 1. One lane in each direction from west of San Luis Way to Intake Boulevard extended; maintain existing western terminus to retain residential neighborhood integrity.
 - 2. Extend as four lane divided facility between Intake Boulevard and Olive Lake Drive.
- F. Chanslor Way: two lanes in each direction with no median divider.
- G. 11th Avenue: extend with one lane in each direction, with center turn lane between Intake Boulevard and Olive Lake Drive.
- H. 10th Avenue: two lanes in each direction with no median divider; extend to Olive Lake Drive extension.
- I. 8th Avenue: one lane in each direction, with center turn lane.
- J. Lovekin Boulevard: two lanes in each direction with median divider between 8th Avenue and 14th Avenue.
- K. Broadway: two lanes in each direction with no median divider; extend between 10th Avenue and 8th Avenue east of the rail facilities to enable parcels to be developed west of the Broadway extension.
- L. Seventh Street: two lanes in each direction with median divider between 10th Avenue and 16th Avenue.

- M. Intake Boulevard: two lanes in each direction with median divider between 10th Avenue and 14th Avenue.
- N. Olive Lake Drive: construct interchange with I-10 and extend with two lanes in each direction with median divider from 10th Avenue to 16th Avenue.

CIRCULATION GOAL

1. The provision of a circulation system that allows for the efficient and safe movement of people, vehicles, and goods through transportation facilities that meet the current demands and projected needs of the community, while maintaining and protecting the rural character of the community.

CIRCULATION POLICIES

1. Assure the provision of dedicated easements or deeded right-of-way adequate to insure the extension and interconnection of intra-city and regional services and infrastructure facilities.
2. Assure the preservation and utilization of existing major railroad lines, spurs, or sidings, and terminals for the exchange and conveyance of goods and materials.
3. As a means of mitigating current and anticipated inadequacies in roadway capacities, every effort shall be made to secure additional right-of-way to widen city streets to General Plan standards assigned to each. Required additional right-of-way shall be utilized for street widening and other improvements when such improvements can be safely made.
4. Assure the long-term viability of the City's roadway system through the rigorous requirement of full dedications of rights-of-way and complete development of street and streetscape improvements.
5. Local street rights-of-way of less than sixty (60) feet shall be permitted within Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) where such streets remain private and are maintained by a bona fide homeowner's association, and when on-street parking is restricted.
6. The City shall negotiate for, and/or take other appropriate means to acquire additional right-of-way when necessary to meet projected General Plan traffic volumes and to assure the construction of improvements to provide acceptable levels of service. Other intersections shall be monitored and analysed yearly to gauge the need for construction of improvements.
7. Where possible, the City shall assure the provision of signed and striped bike lanes on arterial and collector roadways to assure the safety of bicyclers and the operation of a structured circulation system. On-street parking may be prohibited along portions of these routes.

8. Major elements of the circulation system serving the Blythe Airport shall be planned at capacities capable of supporting expanded adjacent commercial and industrial development.
9. The City shall consult and coordinate with the Riverside County Road Department and the California Department of Transportation to assure a coherent and logical extension of the regional transportation system through each jurisdiction.
10. Through traffic shall be concentrated on arterial and collector roadways, thereby providing safer and quieter traffic impacts within residential neighborhoods.
11. Provide and maintain roadway intersection operations at Level of Service (LOS) D or better at peak traffic volumes for all segments of the City's circulation system.
12. Minimum separation between driveway intersections along arterial roadways shall be at least 200 feet whenever possible.
13. When processing applications for new development, the City shall consider appropriate site planning techniques, which minimize impacts to traffic flow and safety and which provide aesthetically and functionally satisfying transportation system design solutions.
14. Provide additional driveways only if the daily volumes using one driveway would exceed 5,000 vehicles (both directions), or if traffic using one driveway would exceed the capacity of a stop sign controlled intersection during one peak street traffic hour.
15. Allow for adequate truck routes within the City, while maintaining acceptable traffic safety conditions. Truck routes shall be restricted to I-10, Intake Boulevard, 16th Avenue, 18th Avenue, Neighbors Boulevard and Mesa Drive, and all truck routes shall be appropriately signed and enforced.
16. The City shall allow the interim use of Lovekin Boulevard as a truck route until such time as alternative truck routes are developed which will relieve Lovekin Boulevard and provide adequate service for truck traffic.

HOUSING ELEMENT

Background

The California Government Code Article 10.6 requires every California city and county to prepare and adopt a Housing Element as part of the required General Plan. This element must be revised periodically, at least every five years. Availability of decent and affordable housing in a suitable living environment is a high priority for the State and the City of Blythe as well.

This element has several objectives, foremost to serve as the official policy guide for the decision makers of the City, such as the Planning Commission and City Council, and other agencies having a responsibility to provide housing to all citizens regardless of income, age, race, ethnic background or family status. Additionally, this part of the General Plan will serve as a directional aid to be used by businesses, developers and builders, institutions and non-profit organizations whose decisions could have an effect on the community and its housing.

Regional Setting

The City of Blythe and the surrounding Palo Verde Valley have experienced erratic growth, caused in part by the nationwide decline in agricultural markets, lingering impacts of the 1981-83 recession and record high interest rates. Blythe is located in Regional Statistical Area #54, described more fully below, with development primarily occurring adjacent to the California/Arizona border along Interstate Highway 10 (I-10).

Blythe and the surrounding area depend on tourism for both taxable sales receipts and the employment base. The Colorado River, located on the eastern boundary of the Palo Verde Valley, about 1.5 miles from Blythe's City limit, attracts visitors from Arizona, the Los Angeles Basin and the Coachella Valley. The area around Blythe is mainly agricultural.

Regional Statistical Area #54

The City of Blythe is located within Regional Statistical Area (RSA) #54, which also includes the Palo Verde Valley and surrounding communities. The area has experienced erratic growth in the past, caused in part by the difficulties encountered by agricultural industries. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) estimates population growth in RSA #54 at 3.7% for the period from 1970 to 1980. From 1980 to 1985, however, population in the RSA grew from 17,000 to 19,200, a 13% increase. SCAG projects population for the year 2010 at 27,429, a 53% increase over 1980.

Population and Housing

Population growth in the City has been slow, but is expected to increase with the location of a State Correctional Facility approximately 16 miles west of Blythe. Historic and projected population and housing unit growth is shown in Table III-8 below.

Table III-8
Population & Housing Units
1970 - 2010

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>POP.</u>	<u># OF UNITS</u>
1970 ¹	7,047	2,000
1980 ¹	6,805	2,468
1983 ²	7,502	N/A
1986 ³	7,775	2,646
1989 ⁴	8,153	2,783
2010 ⁵	11,682	4,577

¹ 1970 or 1980 Census of Population and Housing.

² 1983 Special Census of Population and Housing.

³ Estimate provided by Riverside County.

⁴ Estimate provided by California Department of Finance

⁵ Projection provided by Southern California Association of Governments (1987).

Population in and around the City swells during the winter months, the majority of visitors residing in Recreational Vehicle Parks in the Sphere-of-Influence and along the Colorado River.

According to a special census done in October, 1983, the median age of the City's residents was 27.1 years, 2.8 years lower than the State average. Furthermore, the City had a much higher number of young people, at 38%, than the State average of 30.9%. The population was almost equally divided between males and females, with 3,768 and 3,734, respectively. The City has a Hispanic population of 3,246 (43%), well above the State average.

Table III-9
Population by Age Group
1983

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0-19	2,840	38
20-24	634	8
25-44	2,032	27
45-64	1,287	17
65+	709	10
	7,502	100

Source: Special Census of Population and Housing, October 1983.

Table III-10
1983 Ethnic Composition
1983

<u>Race</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>City %</u>	<u>State %</u> <u>(1980)</u>
White	3,636	49.0	76.2
Hispanic	3,246	43.0	38.9
Black	520	7.0	7.6
Asian	44	0.6	5.3
Other	56	0.8	9.9

Source: Special Census of Population and Housing, October 1983.

Based on 1989 statistics, there are 3.06 persons per household, for a total of 2,596 households with a population of 7,950 persons in these households¹. Using averages established by the 1983 special census, about 76% of these households are married couples with 16% headed by a female householder and 4% headed by a male with no wife present.

Group quarters population in 1989 totalled 203². These quarters are defined as living situations where kitchen and/or bathrooms are shared; examples are boarding homes, nursing homes, jails and college dormitories.

¹ California Department of Finance, estimate for January 1, 1989.

² Ibid.

Household Income

In 1980, the household income in Blythe was \$13,594, well below the State median income of \$21,083. Estimates for 1986 put the City's median household income at \$17,485³. This should rise with the opening of the new correctional facility as in 1987 the average employee earned over \$31,000.00.

The State of California has designated categories for income groups as follows in Table III-11. In 1980, about 26% of households in Blythe and the surrounding ZIP Code area (92225) received Social Security income with 15% receiving public assistance.

Table III-11
Income Categories
Riverside County
1980

<u>Category</u>	<u>% of Median Income</u>	<u>Income Equivalent</u>
Very Low	0-50	\$0-8,019
Low	50-80	8,020-12,830
Moderate	80-120	12,831-19,244
Upper	120+	19,245+

Source: 1980 Census of Population and Housing.

Housing Costs and Values

The California Department of Housing and Community Development defines overpayment for housing as any amount over 30% of gross income spent on housing expenses, for example, mortgage payment, interest, rent, taxes, utilities, maintenance, etc. Due to rising interest rates and utility costs, however, it is not uncommon for households to spend more than 30% for all housing expenses.

Based on the income categories established above in Table III-11, in 1980 41% of all households exceeded this 30% rule-of-thumb for housing expenditures relative to income. The percentage was nearly twice as much for renters, not an uncommon situation in many communities. With the expected rise in median household income reflecting higher average wages of State Correctional Facility employees, this percentage should decrease.

³ Riverside County estimate.

Table III-12
Household Overpayment for Housing
1980

<u>Category</u>	<u>No. Households</u> <u>Overpaying for Housing</u>	<u>% of Total</u> <u>Housing Units</u>
Renter, Very Low-Moderate	698	28.3
Owner, Very Low-Moderate	314	12.7

The overpayment for housing by home owners may not be a long-term difficulty as the owner is building equity in an investment and interest payments and property taxes are tax deductible, effectively increasing income levels. Some homeowners may have paid off mortgaged indebtedness so that monthly house payments are no longer required. In 1980, 35% of all owner-occupied housing units were owned free and clear. In some cases, reverse annuity mortgages are available to such owners as a mechanism of increasing income levels. For renters, this is not the case. Additionally, renters, once the terms of an initial lease expire, may be faced with consistently escalating monthly rents or, in the case of mobile home parks, the close-out of the park itself as the land is underutilized or the park is too small or outdated to be feasibly refurbished.

The 1980 median housing value in the City was \$45,700, far below the State median of \$84,745. The non-urban nature and very slow growth of the community have kept housing costs low. Well-documented and more up-to-date information is not readily available. For purposes of determining housing costs, the newspaper serving the community of Blythe was checked for both rentals and units for sale for Friday, July 28, 1989. This survey included only those units with a sales or rental price listed. If no price was listed or rental rate advertised, the unit was not counted as part of this survey.

Three bedroom, two bath new homes (J & L Homes) were listed as starting at \$75,900 with 30-year FHA financing available with less than \$4,000 down. Resale homes listed varied considerably in price, starting at \$29,000 for 2 bedrooms, 1 bath and ending at \$175,000 for 4 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths. The median selling price for the fourteen resale units listed in Blythe was \$64,250. One condo was listed for sale at \$59,500. Nine mobile homes were for sale, all previously owned, ranging in price from \$23,000 to \$89,900 (median of \$28,500). Residential lots were available as well, listed for sale at 23¢ per square foot to 85¢ per square foot (\$10,020 to \$37,030 per acre), depending on improvements. Two building construction firms in active production in Blythe have indicated that a residential lot for single-family development costs \$12,000 to \$15,000 fully improved with required public facilities.

Two new residential developments in Blythe are now underway. Blythe Chaparral Estates consists of manufactured homes on 6,000 square foot lots. The homes, 2-, 3- and 4-bedrooms with 1,128 to 1,750 square feet in size, start at \$69,950. Thirty year financing is available and the project is both VA and FHA approved. River Valley is a traditional stick-built project with 3-, 4- and 5-bedroom homes on 8,000 square foot lots. Price ranges from \$99,000 to \$119,000.

Rental units were available in three categories: houses, apartments and mobile homes. Several one bedroom houses with utilities paid as part of the rent were noted at \$300 to \$435 per month. This rose for a 2 and 3-bedroom house to \$450-460 per month. Rents that did not include utilities were about the same, ranging from \$250 for a studio apartment to \$575 for a 4-bedroom house. Several apartments were listed as Section 8 units or Housing Authority units. Blythe Villa Apartments, Broadway Manor Apartments and Sunset West Apartments were taking applications for occupancy. Three mobile homes were for rent, at \$325, \$340 and \$550 per month. One mobile home space was listed for rent at \$90 per month.

Blythe has a variety of housing types available for sale or rent. The median priced resale unit mentioned above, \$64,250, requires an annual income of \$19,275. Of the three new residential developments noted, average sales price is \$84,950 meaning a family would need an income of \$25,485 to afford the home. Mobile homes generally require less annual income as the median price of those surveyed was \$28,500, necessitating an income of \$8,550. Mobile home rents range from \$250 to \$575, depending on the type and size of unit; these rents require an income of \$10,000 to \$23,000 annually.

Vacancy Rates

The 1989 vacancy rate in the City was estimated by the Department of Finance at 6.72%. The Department, however, does not break down these figures based on housing vacancy due to dilapidation or need of repair. Additionally, the arrival of employees of the State Correctional Facility has most likely generated pressure on the local housing market, lowering the vacancy rate since the estimate (January 1). This is due to the relationship of vacancy rates to population growth and housing starts. Typically, population growth is necessary to trigger new housing construction. It is expected that the vacancy rate will continue to drop until new housing starts come on-line. During this time when demand nearly equals supply, those seeking housing will be forced to seek alternatives, such as housing that is inconveniently located, substandard in condition, overcrowded or meant only to be temporary lodgings, such as a motel. The State has indicated that future additions to the nearby Correctional Facility will be timed, when possible, to coincide with increased housing supply.

Housing Stock and Conditions

Total housing stock increased 315 dwelling units from the 1980 Census through January 1, 1989. This is a 12.8% change in housing as compared to a nearly 20% increase in population over the same time period. The first six months of 1989 accounted for 30 permits for new single family housing, five permits for duplexes and one permit for a multiple dwelling structure. It is anticipated that 50 more dwelling units will be permitted in the last half of 1989, bring the 1989 projected unit total to 110.

In 1989, as in the past, Blythe's housing stock is predominantly detached single family (1,920 units) with one 70-unit condo project. In multi-family buildings, there were 733 units. There were also a total of 60 mobile homes.

The mobile homes are generally located in three parks or on scattered sites throughout the City. Acreage designated in the General Plan as "R-M" (Residential - Medium Density) provides substantial potential for the addition of mobile home development upon approval of a conditional use permit. Mobile homes provide low-cost and starter-home options for the first-time home buyers. The low initial purchase price, transportability and low maintenance costs are attractive; however, limited life and financing options coupled with the need to lease land are detractors for potential purchasers. There is a nationwide developing trend for retired persons to purchase this type of low-cost housing. This could impact the sector of the Blythe housing market that is now devoted to mobile homes. Also, as vacancy rates continue to decline, development of mobile home parks may become more attractive. The City indicates that a mobile home park development has been proposed and is in the review process.

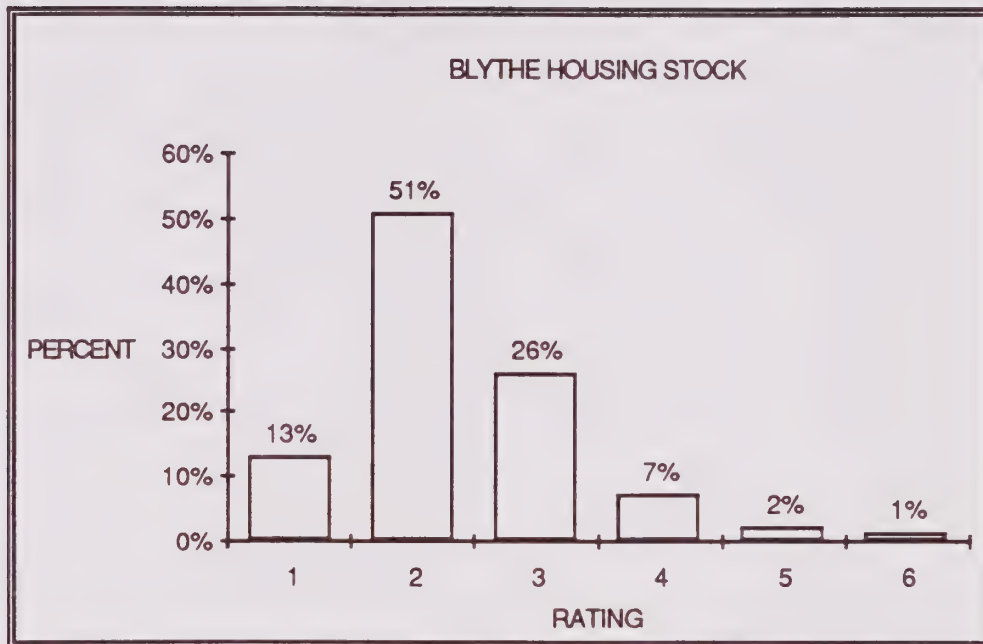
The outlook for the single family and multi-family markets is favorable with increased demand over the next one to two years, resulting in a higher rate of construction. If interest rate increases are moderate and suitable housing is built, strong demand for single-family units is expected to continue as the State Correctional Facility becomes fully operational. One advantage of this expanded employment base is the expectation of rising household incomes that translates into increased purchasing power for move-up housing.

A survey conducted by a private consultant in 1987 rated the condition of the existing housing stock in Blythe. Some additional survey work was completed in 1988 as part of redevelopment planning efforts in older and deteriorating neighborhoods. Housing was ranked on a scale of 1 to 6, with the following definitions applying:

- 1 Very Good Condition, no maintenance necessary.
- 2 Good Condition, minor aesthetic maintenance necessary.
- 3 Acceptable Condition, aesthetic and structural maintenance necessary.
- 4 Poor Condition, major aesthetic and considerable structural maintenance necessary.
- 5 Unacceptable Condition, considerable delapidation, health and safety a concern.
- 6 Dangerous Condition, structure is not sound, health and safety in jeopardy.

The chart below illustrates each of the categories and the corresponding percentage of Blythe housing which falls into each.

The survey found that the majority of the housing stock in the City (64%) is in excellent or good condition with only 10% considered to in poor to unacceptable condition. The housing stock survey did not include a comprehensive visit throughout apartment buildings and condominium projects. City staff currently estimates that 70% of all housing meets minimum Code requirements; this is a substantial improvement related to an increased level of Code enforcement activity and community-wide educational efforts as well as increased demand for local housing units.



Housing Overcrowding

Overcrowding is defined as more than 1.01 persons per room in a dwelling unit. Overcrowding can burden public facilities and services as well as having a negative impact on the quality of neighborhood living conditions. The 1980 Census identified a total of 276 units (12%) in the City where this condition occurred. Of these, 155 units were owner occupied. As new and larger units are constructed, this percentage is expected to decline, particularly for owner-occupied units.

Residential Land Inventory

In 1988, there were 375 net acres of land within the City limits developed as residential uses. Given the 2,646 (1988) units identified in the City at that time, the City has an average residential density of 7 units per net acre.

There were 382 net acres of vacant land in the City designated for residential development. Table III-13 breaks down the potential buildout for this vacant land given currently designated density limits.

A density bonus of 25% for development of affordable housing has been proposed in this General Plan and approved conceptually by the City Council; the Zoning Ordinance will be amended in late 1989 or early 1990 to reflect this policy.

Table III-13
General Plan Vacant Residential Land
1988

Vacant Designation	Potential* Acres	Dwelling Units
Low Density	247.0	1,729
Medium Density	135.0	1,890
Totals	382.0	3,619
Note: Low density is 1 - 7 units per acre. Medium density is 7 - 14 units per acre.		

Existing Affordable Housing Programs

There are seven affordable housing projects in the City, which provide a total of 373 very low, low and moderate income units. Of the total 155 units available to Section 8 qualified tenants, 154 were leased and occupied as of March 1989.

El Solano Hotel

The Riverside County Housing Authority has purchased and is remodeling the El Solano Hotel which will provide shelter for the low-income elderly. There are a total of 39 units, 25 of which are "Single Room Occupancy" units, and 14 which have kitchenettes. All tenants will qualify under HUD Section 8 regulations and pay 30% of their income towards the rent of the unit. The difference will be subsidized by the County. The City of Blythe provided technical advice, fast-tracking review of plans and no-cost inspections as a project participant.

There is no limit to the length of stay as long as the tenant remains eligible under Section 8 qualifications. In addition, the "Meals on Wheels" program at the Blythe Senior Center will provide meals for tenants. Depending on available funds, the County may, in the future, add a dining facility for tenants. The El Solano Hotel is located on South Spring Street, approximately 300 feet south of Hobsonway.

Palm Drive Apartments

The Palm Drive Apartments were completed in 1988, providing 68 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units; 14 units are reserved for those qualifying for Very Low Income Housing. All units utilize solar domestic hot water systems which help reduce utility costs to tenants. The City participated in providing financial assistance to this project through the use of an Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG). These units are located at Palm Drive and Barnard Street.

Sunset West Apartments

Sunset West Apartments are also low and moderate income housing. Completed in 1986, the project is comprised of 50 units, constructed with FHMA financing. Sunset West Apartments are located on Lovekin Boulevard, approximately 300 feet north of Hobsonway.

Silsby Garden Apartments

Silsby Garden Apartments are FHA-financed, providing 50 units of low income housing. This development is located on North Ninth Street.

Sunrise Apartments

An FHA financed development providing 50 units of Low and Very Low Income Housing, this is a HUD Section 8 housing project. Sunrise Apartments are located on North Palm Drive at Chanslor Way.

Broadway Manor Apartments

Broadway Manor Apartments provide a total of 64 affordably priced units; 44 units are subsidized. These apartments are located at Broadway and 14th Avenue.

Blythe Villa Apartments

Blythe Villa Apartments are comprised of 52 housing units, all HUD Section 8. This project is located on Barnard Street at Palm Drive.

Redevelopment Agency Housing Fund

The City's Redevelopment Agency, formed in 1984, is required by law to provide low and moderate income housing. Section 33334.2 of the California Health and Safety Code states:

"Not less than 20 percent of all taxes which are allocated to the agency shall be used by the agency for the purpose of increasing and improving the community's supply of low and moderate income housing available at affordable housing cost....to persons and families of low and moderate income and very low income households..."

The Code further states that funds to be used for low and moderate income housing must be held in a separate Low and Moderate Housing Fund until spent.

As of August of 1989, the City had set aside approximately \$216,000 in the Housing Fund. The City does not anticipate any growth in this fund as the tax exempt bond issue which provided the majority of the funds irrevocably pledges the tax increments to debt financing. Limited growth is expected in the redevelopment project area, thereby constricting the potential for additional tax increment funds that can be set aside in the Housing Fund.

In 1988 and 1989, the City expanded the designated redevelopment project area, which allowed additional tax increments to pay debt service on tax exempt bond issues. As with earlier issues, 20% of these funds will be directed to the Housing Fund.

Special Needs Housing

There is a direct relationship between income, ability to pay for housing and the cost of housing. For most households, the key issue is affordability; for others, the issue may be design and special features, such as for the wheelchair-bound or elderly person, or access to services, such as the housebound person, due to infirmity or lack of transportation. The households that are significantly effected by these concerns are those generally defined as having "special needs" in housing: poverty-stricken families, female-headed households with dependent children at home, the elderly and handicapped, large households and the homeless. This type of "special needs" household must spend a disproportionate share of income on housing, live in poor or overcrowded conditions or in inconvenient locations or undesirable settings.

Several basic assumptions have been made in developing the analysis that follows. First, characteristics demonstrated in the 1980 Census have remained constant in relation to Blythe's population. Second, the total population for Blythe in 1980 was 6,805 persons with 2,217 households. Third, the total 1989 population is 8,153 persons with a count of 2,596 households.

Female-Headed Households

In 1980, there were 231 households with incomes below poverty level in the City. Of these households, 56 had a female head of household. This represents 2.5% of all the households in the City and 27% of all households headed by a female. A straight line estimate based on Department of Finance data for January 1, 1989, puts the number of female headed poverty-level households at 66; 62 of these households have children aged 17 and under at home.

Elderly Households

In 1980, there were 347 households where the head of household was over 64 years of age. Of these, 119 were below the poverty level. Estimates for 1989 put senior citizen households at 406, of which 139 have incomes below poverty level. The Solano Hotel project, opening soon, will provide housing for 39 elderly low income persons/households. The provision of affordable housing for senior citizens must be a priority in any community as the general population ages; this is even more true for Southern California communities that attract in-migrating retirees. Senior housing projects fall into three general categories:

Age Segregated Communities: This type of community can be of any size and usually includes a number of recreational opportunities, geared to the pre-retiree (55 to 64 years of age) and active retiree (65 to 74 years of age). These projects generally provide entirely independent living conditions with age restrictions placed on ownership/rental.

Congregate Living Facilities: This type of development provides retirees in the 75 to 85 year range with independent apartments and also optional congregate meals and organized activities for residents. Medical care is not generally provided, although a nurse may visit occasionally as part of the activity program. The City of Blythe is now discussing this type of project with several possible developers.

Life Care Communities: These developments are generally in the upper income levels and provide for all possible needs, from independent living to full-time nursing care.

Large Households

In 1983, there were 417 households with more than 5 persons per household; 156 were renter households. This represented 16.9% of the total households in the City. In 1989, it is estimated that 439 large households live in the City, 164 occupying rental housing. No distinct correlation can be made between income and household size.

The Handicapped

The 1980 Census defines two types of disabilities: "work disabilities" and "lack of access to public transportation." According to the Census, there were 159 persons with a work disability and 57 persons without access to public transportation in Blythe in 1980. It is estimated that this has increased slightly in 1989 to 191 persons with a work disability and 68 persons without access to public transportation.

The Homeless

The State Housing Guidelines require the consideration of the homeless in every housing element. The Southern California Association of Governments has identified several factors in the increase in homeless persons in this area as well as throughout the country. These include:

1. The de-institutionalization and treatment of mentally ill patients;
2. The shortage of affordable housing;
3. A lack of employment opportunities;
4. Negative family environments.

The number of homeless persons is difficult to quantify with any degree of accuracy. The homeless tend to be mobile, often moving from one city or county to another. The mild winter climate of Southern California may attract homeless in these months while the hot summer weather encourages the homeless to move elsewhere.

Church related relief efforts together with Riverside County agencies are the primary source of support for the homeless in Blythe. A local source⁴ from the City of Blythe, responsible for coordination with Riverside County, indicates a peak total monthly caseload of 10-15 homeless persons and families during the winter months; most of these are "transient" homeless, such as a motorist stranded on I-10 with major automobile repairs needed and no available funds. In the case of transient homeless, there is a Traveller's Relief Fund (United Way agency) administered by the City of Blythe Police Department; on occasion, this fund is unable to provide relief if the person in need of assistance refuses to provide a name for verification. Other more short-term homeless are assisted with security deposits, one or two months of rent, funds for utilities or repair or replacement expenses, such as for a hot water heater or air conditioner. "Transitional" homeless total about 10-12 families or individuals a year; this category of homeless can be affected through job training and placement. Once the householder or person is suitably trained and has a job, the cause of homelessness is removed. No homeless person or family is turned away because of a lack of resources; generally each church or agency handles 1 or 2 cases per month. Most homeless persons cite loss of a job or reduction in work hours as the reason for homelessness.

⁴ J. Newell Sorensen, Director of the Department of Development Services, City of Blythe, August 1989.

There are no specially designated emergency shelters in the City of Blythe. Homeless in need of shelter are housed in local motel units. If the homeless are transitional, services are provided by Riverside County. In some instances, the homeless person or family is relocated to another city, such as one in Coachella Valley, where more specialized services are available. If a motel unit were unavailable to provide shelter, a circumstance that has yet to arise, the homeless person or family would be relocated to another community where housing or shelter is available.

No sites for the location of emergency housing shelters are designated in Blythe as the need does not justify the expenditures involved; peak demand is estimated at 15 cases per winter month (5 winter months) with the majority of these cases transient in nature, related to the community's location to I-10. As Blythe continues to grow, this may change; the situation should be monitored on a continual basis.

Farm Workers

Based on the SCAG Regional Housing Needs Assessment, there are no farmworker households in the City eligible for public assistance. Due to the agricultural nature of the Palo Verde Valley, it is possible that farmworker families may reside in Blythe in the future and will require assistance or affordable housing.

Summary

The following have been identified as existing special needs households in the City of Blythe. Numbers cited below are based upon 1989 estimates provided by the State Department of Finance combined with straight line calculations from the 1980 and 1983 Censuses. When not available by special needs groups, typical multipliers for deriving poverty-level households are used.

Female Headed Households: 245 households

Below Poverty level: 66 households (62 with children aged 17 and under present)

Elderly Headed Households: 406 households

Below Poverty level: 139 households

Large Family Households: 439 households

Below Poverty level: Estimated at 46 households ($439 \times 10.4\%$ [ratio of poverty level households to total households] = 46)

Persons with a Work Disability: 191 persons

Below Poverty level: Estimated at 29 persons ($191 \times 15.4\%$ [ratio of poverty level person to total population] = 29)

Persons without access to Public Transportation: 68 persons

Below Poverty line: Estimated at 10 persons ($68 \times 15.4\%$ [ratio of poverty level persons to total population] = 10)

Farmworkers: 0. See discussion above. No need is indicated by SCAG.

Homeless: Peak monthly caseload is 10 - 15 homeless persons and/or families during five winter months. 1 case per month is transitional homeless; all other cases are transient in nature.

Housing Constraints

Infrastructure Constraints to Vacant Residential Land

There are no identifiable infrastructure constraints relative to the potential development of vacant land for residential purposes within the City of Blythe. In the past, limited capacity at the waste treatment facility and restricted water line flow potentially limited development; however, these conditions have been rectified.

Market Constraints and Government Regulation

Market and governmental factors impact the development of new housing in any community. Local government can play a limited role in housing development, primarily in the affordable housing area, which represents only a small percentage of the overall housing market; even here, opportunity to reduce costs is limited to the following areas:

1. Reduce costs by maximizing economy and efficiency, from the regulatory and development perspectives
 - A. Reduce principal cost categories associated with construction
 1. Cost of site improvements and site preparation, including standards
 2. Reduce cost of off-site improvements
 3. Reduce cost of construction, including standards, especially for density of units. Reduce size of units. Reduce expenditure per square foot.
 - B. Reduce miscellaneous costs associated with financing and fees
 1. Cost of financing and interest
 2. Cost of fees, permits, processing, etc.
2. Reduce cost through subsidy
 - A. By the public, such as use of public funds or land
 - B. By the developer
 1. Cost absorbed by the developer from profits he would otherwise make
 2. Cost passed forward by the developer to the buyers of the market-rate units in the development
 3. Cost passed backward in that developer will not spend as much for the land (cost absorbed by the initial landowner)

Any housing program that is designed to make affordable housing available to the citizens of the community must be carefully considered, even when particular groups are targeted, such as the elderly or low income, as the occupants of the units. The program must give conscious consideration of the burden that is being passed on to the developer and the extent to which costs may really be reduced.

There are approximately 382 net acres of vacant residential land in the City, of which about 135 acres are suitable for affordable housing; this land is designated in the General Plan for medium density (7 to 14 units per acre) development. A total of 1,890 units could be built

upon these lands; this figure could increase were density bonuses applicable. Considering the full build-out potential for all 382 net acres, there is enough appropriately designated and zoned land in the City of Blythe to accommodate housing needs over the next five years.

Cost of land ranges from \$10,000 an acre and upwards, depending on location and infrastructure provided. A typical residential lot is priced between \$12,000 and \$15,000 fully improved. Construction costs of housing are also favorable when considered with other Southern California communities. In the past, developers with approved projects in the City have had difficulty in obtaining construction financing; this was due to the perception of Blythe as an economically depressed community or one in which the economic base was not sufficiently broad to provide protection from loan defaults. With the nearby completion of the first phases of the State Correctional Facility, residential construction activity has increased and single family mortgage financing in particular has become more readily available.

Development Application Processing Time and Fees

The time required to process residential development projects in the City varies according to the scope of the proposal. Tentative approval of single family subdivisions requires approximately 30 to 45 days, including approval by the City Council. Development plans for multi-unit projects can take from 30 to 60 days, depending on the complexity. The City Council also hears and approves all such development proposals.

Building permit and development fees for new construction are set based on the individual project's value and the number of units proposed. Fees are currently low and it is not anticipated that fees be increased to unreasonable levels; refer to the fee schedule in the Administrative Section of the Uniform Building Code for current building-related fees. Other fees may be imposed as part of the conditions of approval or mitigation measures associated with a specific project. The City applies the Uniform Building Code with some local amendments which are not restrictive to the development of affordable housing.

Energy Conservation

The City is located in the Colorado division of the Sonoran Desert. As such, the City has encouraged the development of plans which are sensitive to building orientation, proper overhangs, adequate insulation and glazing and proper use of landscaping. The City will continue to review project plans for energy efficiency and the comfort and economy of the residents.

Projected Housing Needs

The Southern California Association of Governments has adopted the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) to project housing needs in five year increments for each county and city in the region. The model was revised in 1988; results have been used in this document.

Projected Housing Needs

Table III-14 includes housing needs for the City of Blythe, both existing and projected. The first two categories, "Existing Need for Affordable Housing" and "Future Need for Housing", were prepared by the Southern California Association of Governments. The "Rehabilitation Needs" data was prepared by Terra Nova Planning and Research, Inc. The State Department of Corrections estimated the last category, "Housing Units Needed to Accommodate State Correctional Facility Employees". Forecasts of housing demand by SCAG did not include the units necessary to meet the needs of prison-related employee households.

Historically, construction of residential units in the City has been erratic and slow; population growth has outpaced housing unit increases since 1980. In the past, developers have had difficulty in obtaining construction financing for certain types of projects that have been approved by the City of Blythe. A pressing need was evident in 1987 with the imminent arrival of State Correctional Facility employees; this need was not immediately met but the production of units has increased since this point in time.

Table III-14
Housing Needs for the City of Blythe
1989 - 1994

<u>Existing Need for Affordable Housing</u> ⁵	
(Low-income households paying more than 30% of gross income for housing expenses)	532
<u>Future Need for Housing</u> ⁶	
New construction units from 7/89 to 7/94	216
Very low income (50% or less of median) -37	
Low income (50 - 80% of median) -56	
Moderate (80 - 120% of median) -38	
High income (120%+ of median) -85	
New construction units to accommodate household growth (7/89 - 7/94)	127
Vacancy adjustment units to raise vacancy rate to 2% for single family & 5% for multi-family from 7/89 to 7/94	9
Demolition adjustment units to account for units eliminated from inventory from 7/89 to 7/94	80
"Gap" units to account for time period from 1/88 to 6/89	63
<u>Rehabilitation Needs</u> ⁷	
Rehabilitation units (Identified in 1987 as units in Poor or Unacceptable condition)	238
Conservation units (Existing affordable housing units including mobile homes)	433
<u>Housing Units Needed to Accommodate State Correctional Facility Employees</u> ⁸	
(Assumes 190% capacity with 987 employees)	
New construction or installation through 1991	737
Single family homes -527	
Multi-family units -184	
Mobile homes -26	

⁵ This estimate includes many of the households that are mentioned in the **Special Needs** section of the Element. Caution should be exercised in the use of the data as doublecounting may occur.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Estimate by Terra Nova Planning and Research, Inc. derived from a 1987 survey of housing conditions.

⁸ Refer to section in this Element for specific details and discussion of housing need associated with the State Correctional Facility.

State Correctional Facility Generated Housing Demand

The construction of the State Chuckawalla Correctional Facility in the vicinity of Blythe is expected to generate a substantial demand for market-rate housing units. Housing demand cited above in the list of quantified housing needs was based on data provided by the State Department of Corrections which noted a need for 737 units for prison employees; this is in addition to the anticipated rate of growth in the City from 1988 to 1993.

Employment generated housing demand by the workers affiliated with the correctional institution will be the most significant source of Blythe's residential growth over the next few years. The following discussion assumes prison employment of a level to support the facility at 190% capacity and has been adjusted for employment from the local labor pool. This level of operation requires 987 employees, 250 of which will be locally hired.

Single Family Development

The fiscal impact study associated with the State Correctional Facility indicates that the development and operation of the institution at 190% of capacity will result in a demand for approximately 527 single family dwellings. Several portions of the City are well suited for this particular type of residential development. Single family residential neighborhoods are those somewhat removed from commercial development and subjected to minimum through-traffic. Single family neighborhoods should be typically serviced by local streets, which meet with collector streets which in turn feed to arterial roadways. Ample vacant land that is appropriately zoned and designated in accordance with the General Plan has adequate capacity to support this number of units as well as those required to accommodate expected household growth not associated with the prison.

Multi-Family Development

The direct generation of additional demand for State Correctional Facility employee housing is projected to require the development of approximately 184 multi-family housing units. Inasmuch as prison employees will generate as great a demand for rental as for ownership units⁹, it is possible that a greater number of apartments and condominiums could be required. These are likely to be developed in smaller projects. The three acre 42-unit La Mirage condominium project, recently approved by the City Council, could well serve as a model in terms of size and quality of development for future condominium and apartment projects in the City.

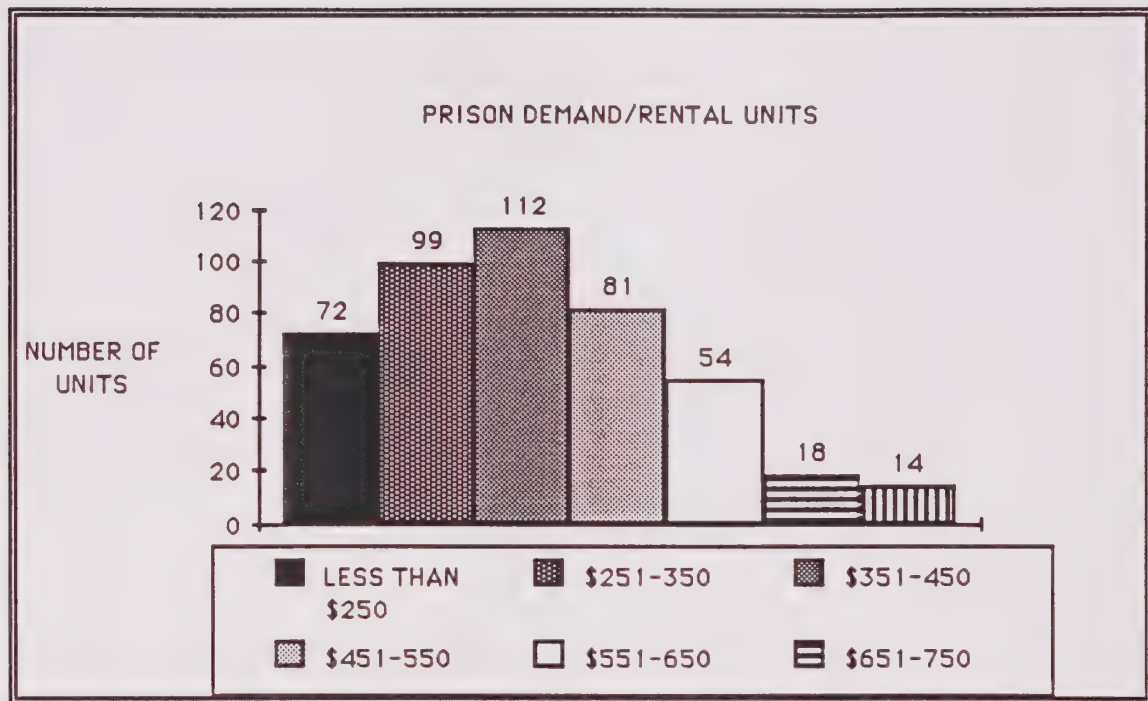
Mobile Home Development

It is estimated that institutionally generated housing demand will necessitate the addition of 26 mobile homes to the housing stock.

Prison Related Rental Demand

The more than 36% of prison employees who are likely to be renters will comprise approximately 166 households which can afford rents of \$451 or more per month. The largest percentage of these employees, 47%, will be able to afford rents in the range of \$250 to \$450 monthly. The prison will generate a total demand for 450 rental units.

⁹ Estimate by the State Department of Corrections notes that tenure among employees is fairly evenly divided between owners and renters.



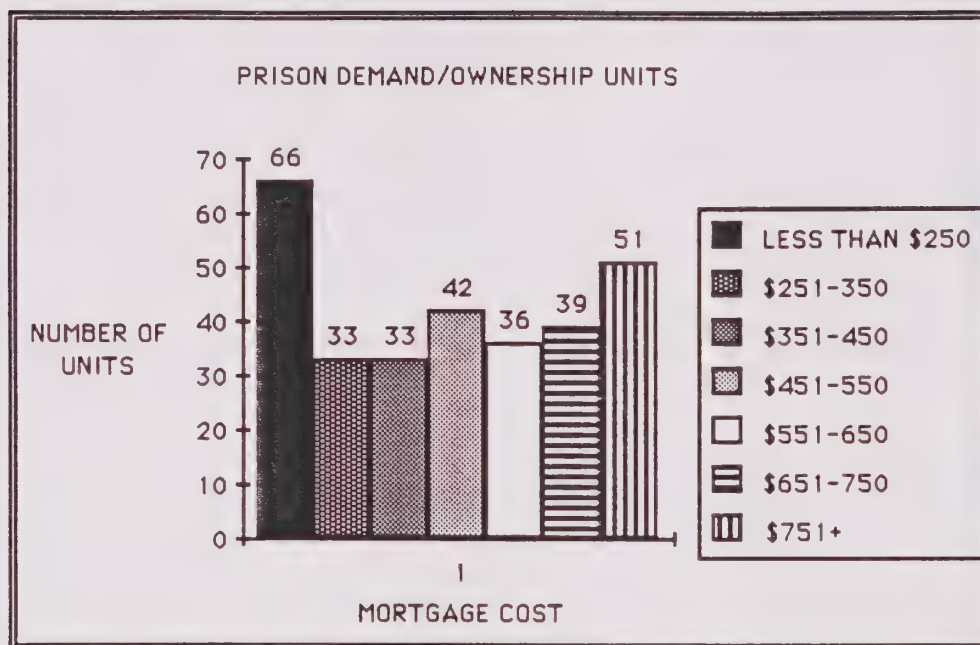
Prison Related Ownership Demand

State Correctional Facility employment will generate a demand for approximately 300 ownership units, either condominiums or single family dwellings. More than 42% of the home buying prison employees are expected to be able to afford mortgage payments of \$551 or more per month, equating to a demand for a total of 126 units in this cost category. Of these 126 upper end units, approximately 90 households will be able to afford mortgages in excess of \$650 per month.

Note on Progress of the State Correctional Facility

The Chuckawalla Valley State Prison opened in December of 1988. The two final facilities are scheduled to open in January of 1990. A total of 690 employees are then anticipated. As of August 1989, there were 397 employees working at the prison; 102 of these were local hires. In September of 1988, the City's Economic Profile noted:

"The State estimates that approximately . . . 737 (residences) at 190% of capacity will be required for new prison employees. This housing is not available at the present time; however, a total of 599 units are currently under construction or under consideration by the Planning Department and City Council. Projects under consideration include 200 apartment units, 175 single family home lots, 42 condominium units and a 256 mobile home (manufactured housing) subdivision."



REVIEW OF HOUSING PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS 1985 - 1989

The 1984 Housing Element for the City of Blythe set out an ambitious program to assist low income households and provide for the betterment of housing conditions on a community-wide basis. Implementation programs were based upon four housing problem areas: quantity, quality, cost and opportunity. Additionally, three general actions were proposed.

The following objectives for 1984 - 1989 were set forth:

- 304 declining housing units: Improve 30 units annually
- 608 deteriorating housing units: Rehabilitate 41 units annually
- 262 dilapidated housing units: Remove 21 units annually
- 506 households in need of financial assistance: Assist 10% annually of total need
- To provide housing for 30 new households, replace 21 dilapidated units removed each year and to provide 6 additional units to balance demand and supply, 52 units annually must be constructed. [6 additional units needed to achieve ideal vacancy rates; 30 additional units needed to accommodate new households]

Housing Quantity Action Programs

- Make information on housing needs and assistance programs available to developers, builders and others in the housing industry

Completed. The City had several publications prepared, such as an economic profile for the community, in order to provide basic information about the housing situation in Blythe. Several seminars were sponsored by the City to answer questions and stimulate interest in various housing programs and possible financing techniques. Information continues to be provided upon request.

- Keep informed about the availability of government programs designed to assist the City in addressing housing problems

On-going. Task assigned to City Manager and Director of Planning. Contacts established at County and State levels. Frequent contact is made and input is regularly given on proposed housing legislation and possible programs. City participates in all appropriate programs administered by Riverside County and the State.

- Encourage new housing construction to meet needs of new households of all economic levels and replace dilapidated units

On-going. Broad range of activities undertaken by the City includes: educational seminars for the housing and financing industries, builders and developers relative to new housing construction and mortgage loan options; review of ordinances and the planning and building process to determine obstacles or inappropriate timing; direct extension of a 0% loan for the construction of 68 units. There are several designated redevelopment areas in the City; pursuant to the Blythe Redevelopment Project No. 1 Plan, at least 30% of all new or rehabilitated units developed in these areas will be available for low and moderate income families.

- Support State legislation permitting and encouraging public and private retirement fund systems to invest more of their assets in California housing, particularly low and moderate income housing

Completed. The City Manager and Planning Director worked with several State legislators in developing appropriate legislation; status of legislation at State level is unknown at this time.

- Utilize CDBG funds to finance activities related to construction of lower-income housing (site clearance, land acquisition, public improvements, etc.)

Completed. The City receives CDBG monies from the County of Riverside as a pass-through entitlement. A variety of funding sources, including CDBG, was used for infrastructure improvements, such as storm drain and water line installation and sewer lift station construction. The Redevelopment Plan provides for all authorized CDBG activities, such as acquisition and clearance, to be implemented in appropriate areas of the City.

Housing Quality Action Programs

- Encourage the rehabilitation of declining and deteriorated housing, particularly low-valued units that provide shelter for low income households

On-going. The City provides advice as requested to households interested in rehabilitation. Systematic code enforcement is undertaken in various neighborhoods throughout the City on an as-needed basis. Additionally, housing conditions surveys

are routinely performed to assess any major shifts in the condition of the community's housing stock. The last survey was completed 1987-88. Compared to a 1983 survey, there were fewer housing units in need of substantial repair. The City also has a CDBG-funded home repair program in order to support rehabilitation activities in the community.

- Support and urge increased funding for government programs that assist rehabilitation of deteriorated housing units

On-going. Task assigned to City Manager and Planning Director. Frequent contact at County and State level, as well as with Federal agencies, is maintained in order to ensure adequate input. Blythe is particularly active in promoting programs and support for communities impacted by the location of correctional facilities.

- Urge new tax laws that provide incentives to rehabilitate low income housing units

On-going. Task assigned to City Manager and Planning Director. Frequent contact at County and State level, as well as with Federal agencies, is maintained in order to ensure adequate input. Blythe is particularly active in promoting proposals that support communities impacted by the location of correctional facilities.

- Upgrade public facilities and services in declining or deteriorated neighborhoods in order to facilitate redevelopment

On-going. All upgrading in Redevelopment designated areas will be in conformance with the City's Redevelopment Plan. Completed public improvements include an upgraded domestic water system, expanded storm drainage facilities, an expanded sewage treatment plant and the installation of street lights throughout the City.

- \$135,000 storm drain installation (Barnard/Lovekin)
- \$400,000 storm drain system improvements
- \$250,000 sewage lift station installation
- \$150,000 park improvements
- \$250,000 pressurize water system and improve fire flow
- \$600,000 upgrade sewage treatment capacity and pond clean-up

- Ensure housing growth is coordinated with the provision of adequate service and facilities

On-going. In conformance with CEQA requirements and applicable City ordinances, all development projects proposed in the City are reviewed and evaluated with regard to the provision of adequate services and facilities. Non-contiguous development, as a general rule, is not permitted.

- Investigate the feasibility of using provisions of Marks-Foran Residential Rehabilitation Act to provide low interest rehabilitation loans

Incomplete. Limited staff resources prohibited pursuing this option.

- Encourage participation in Home Improvement Program administered by the County Housing Authority to increase housing rehabilitation

Completed. After briefing, appropriate City staff were then able to refer possible participants to the County. Close coordination between the City's Code Enforcement staff and the Riverside County staff is an on-going high-priority function in providing services to the citizens.

- Inform the public about self-help techniques in order to enable residents to maintain and improve their homes and neighborhoods

On-going. The City provides advice as requested to households interested in home improvement. Systematic code enforcement is undertaken in various neighborhoods throughout the City on an as-needed basis. Additionally, housing and neighborhood conditions surveys are routinely performed to assess any major shifts in the condition of the community's housing stock as well as trends in neighborhoods in terms of number of Code violations, land use incompatibilities, deficient public facilities, etc. Such a survey was completed for some neighborhoods in 1988 in conjunction with redevelopment planning efforts.

- Strengthen Code enforcement program in order to ensure adequate maintenance of existing housing; support public and private efforts to develop training programs for housing and building code inspectors

Completed. Code enforcement staff attended International Conference of Building Officials training sessions; staff continues to be involved with this organization in order to remain up-to-date and informed about methods of Code enforcement.

- Support strong enforcement of State Revenue and Taxation Code which prohibits owners of substandard units, cited for Code violations, from receiving State income tax deductions with respect to such dwellings

Incomplete. Limited staff resources prohibited pursuing this option.

- Consider adoption of local occupancy inspection ordinance to discourage blight, maintain property values and protect buyers and renters

Incomplete. Limited staff resources prohibited pursuing this option.

- Intensify program of removal of dilapidated housing units but coordinate with services to relocate displaced occupants

On-going. Thirty-eight (38) units have been removed since 1985. Relocation of occupants is coordinated with Riverside County Housing Authority.

- Provide for relocation housing to complement Code enforcement and rehabilitation programs

On-going. Relocation of occupants is coordinated with Riverside County Housing Authority.

Housing Cost Action Programs

- Work with developers, labor unions, realtors, lenders, government officials and citizen groups to inform the public of ways to reduce housing costs

On-going. The City had several publications prepared, such as an economic profile for the community, in order to provide basic information about the housing situation in Blythe. Several seminars were sponsored by the City to answer questions and stimulate interest in various housing programs and possible financing techniques. Purveyors of utilities in the Blythe area provided educational information relative to conservation techniques for distribution to the public. Information continues to be provided upon request or during the course of review by the City when specific project proposals or building plans are submitted. The City has also made low-cost construction loans available to reduce cost to developers/builders and enhance the affordability of the units.

- Urge State and Federal governments to channel adequate amounts of mortgage and rehabilitation money to housing sector

On-going. Task assigned to City Manager and Planning Director. Frequent contact at State and Federal levels is maintained in order to ensure adequate input. Blythe is particularly active in promoting programs and support for communities impacted by the location of correctional facilities. As Blythe did not experience population growth in the early 1980s and demand for housing remained flat, financing for mortgages and rehabilitating homes was not a high priority among area-located lenders. This situation was compounded by a lack of economic growth and failed real estate loans.

- Urge State to lessen importance of property taxes for financing local government and use less regressive taxes instead; advocate reforms in the property tax system which would shift costs of non-property-related services away from the property tax

On-going. Task assigned to City Manager and Planning Director. Frequent contact at State level is maintained in order to ensure adequate input.

- Recommend property tax reduction measures provide tax savings on rental units to be passed on to renters

Progress unknown. There is no documented indication of any action taken.

- Encourage residential lenders to develop and test new mortgage instruments in order to increase opportunities for home ownership

Completed. Several meetings were held with lenders in the area to discuss possible financing techniques. Generally, lenders are constrained by necessary underwriting criteria. More flexible financing techniques that were made available on a broad basis, such as variable rate mortgages, were also obtainable by qualified home purchasers in Blythe.

- Promote the development of lower-cost housing types such as cooperatives and condominiums and encourage home ownership opportunities

Completed. The City Code was reviewed in order to ensure that a variety of housing types were permitted. A higher density condo project was approved for development (42 units); these units will be affordable for low and moderate income households once construction is complete (anticipated within the next 18 months). Condominium conversion proposals are reviewed on a case-by-case basis in order to assess the impact upon lower-income households. It is expected that the conversion proponent would mitigate any adverse impact to such households.

- Review zoning, subdivision and building ordinances for possible removal of provisions which add to housing construction costs without contributing to health, safety or well-being, and consider adding provisions that encourage a variety of housing designs, tenure types and costs

Completed. Necessary ordinances have been reviewed and evaluated. The building permit process has been automated via computer in order to provide a faster tracking system and reduce time involved in obtaining approvals to proceed. The land development review process has been expedited where possible, reducing time to 6 to 8 weeks for approvals for some types of projects. Mobile homes and manufactured housing in conformance with State and HUD guidelines are permitted in the City when applicable ordinances are satisfied.

- Review housing permit review procedures to identify areas where they may be accelerated to eliminate delays

Completed. See comments above. Tract map review, the environmental review process and zone changes now take less time, going from about 4 months to a total of 2 months in process.

- Support legislation that will increase the tax on profits from the sale of homes or apartments held by owners for only a short period of time and simply for speculative purposes

Incomplete. Limited staff resources prohibited pursuing this option.

- Support inclusion of price escalation controls in government-assisted programs that provide low and moderate income housing in order to ensure that the units remain available to low and moderate income persons

On-going. Task assigned to City Manager and Planning Director. Frequent contact with agencies responsible for program implementation is maintained in order to ensure adequate input; staff has consistently recommended price escalation controls.

- Encourage energy conservation in construction and rehabilitation of housing; support testing of alternate home energy sources, new housing forms and construction materials that conserve energy and reduce housing costs

Completed. The City implemented State Title XXIV Energy Conservation Building Code to ensure energy-conserving construction methods. During design review, staff evaluates building orientation and shading of glazed areas with an emphasis on decreasing cooling costs. Local purveyors of utilities also provide educational materials to consumers as well as building trades regarding opportunities for conservation.

Housing Opportunity Action Programs

- Pursue all available housing assistance funds from Federal and State agencies in order to increase housing opportunities for low and moderate income persons

On-going. Task assigned to City Manager and Director of Planning. Contacts were established at Federal and State levels. Frequent contact is made and input is regularly given on possible programs. City participates in all appropriate programs administered by State and Federal agencies.

- Support legislation to increase maximum limits on loans insured under Federal mortgage insurance programs and encourage the State to increase mortgage limits and extend terms for the CalVet loan program

On-going. Task assigned to City Manager and Director of Planning. Contacts were established at State and Federal level. Contact is made and input is given on proposed changes in mortgage limits and terms, as necessary.

- Encourage affirmative marketing program for housing and work with developers, realtors, lenders and community service organizations to solicit support for such programs

On-going. The City has established a fair housing process whereby complaints regarding equal opportunity and unrestricted access to housing are handled and resolved. All Federally and State mandated steps are provided for in Blythe's procedures with any necessary agencies notified of any complaint regarding housing discrimination. Information is available on an as-requested basis; educational briefings are also available for community groups.

- Discourage new assisted housing where it would increase the concentration of low income households within a single area and encourage housing developments that include both market-rate and assisted housing in the same area

On-going. The current pattern of land uses permitted by the General Plan and subsequently through the Zoning Ordinance distributes residential uses of varying densities fairly evenly throughout all neighborhoods of the City. There is vacant land appropriately zoned for lower income housing available. Efforts are made to locate such dwelling units in areas that are close to shopping, schools, public transportation and other services, dependent on the type of household to be served. Proposals are reviewed by the City on a case-by-case basis to ensure good location within the community as a whole. Existing and approved affordable housing projects are located throughout the City; there are no undue concentrations of assisted housing.

- Ensure that rent limits on Federally assisted housing reflect market conditions in order to increase housing opportunities

On-going. The City provides local data and other input to appropriate Federal agencies who set rent limits for various programs.

- Strive to improve job opportunities and increase the incomes of low income households.

On-going. The City has been extremely proactive in recruiting industrial development and employment centers to establish in the Blythe area. The Economic Profile for the community was prepared under contract with the City so that up-to-date information could be readily and conveniently available to interested businesses. The City also cooperates with the Riverside Economic Development effort. One of the fruits of this active recruitment was the location of a State Correctional Facility near Blythe. To date, 102 local people have been selected to fill positions at this facility.

- Support efforts towards a possible program of State assistance for relocation benefits for persons displaced by local Code enforcement and other public projects

On-going. Current relocation activities are limited in Blythe. If relocation is necessary due to a sanctioned redevelopment program, any displacees would be relocated in a manner consistent with State regulations and requirements of the Redevelopment Plan; typically, this involves relocation of the person or household into another unit that is in good repair and of comparable size given financial restraints regarding replacement value of the originally occupied unit. Displacement does not typically occur as a result of enforcement activities; however, in the event that relocation is necessary, Riverside County is the designated agency that provides assistance.

- Provide counseling and assistance to enable displaced households to move to areas outside existing low income and minority concentrations

On-going. See comment immediately above.

- Deposit public funds in lending institutions that make a higher than average proportion of their residential loans in mortgage deficient areas

Open. The City of Blythe adopted by resolution a policy statement relative to the depositing of funds in lending institutions that would provide higher than average levels of residential mortgage financing in mortgage deficient areas of the community. The City has informed all area-wide financial institutions of this policy; to date, no financial institution has responded.

- Support efforts by the State to publish a "Homebuyer's Guide" and State legislation requiring real estate licensees to provide full information about homes being offered for sale.

Completed. The State published such a guide. Other comparable information is made available as needed, for example, handouts that are prepared by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City cooperates with local realtors, providing assistance as needed.

- Support State legislation which clarifies rights and obligations concerning security deposits, broadens protection to tenants from retaliatory eviction and enables tenants to withhold payment of rent for needed repairs

Incomplete. Limited staff resources prohibited pursuing this option.

- Support State legislation providing for the establishment of landlord-tenant mediation and grievance boards, where necessary, to improve landlord-tenant relations through public education, mediation, conciliation of disputes and investigation of complaints

Incomplete. Limited staff resources prohibited pursuing this option.

General Action Programs

- Maintain the Housing Advisory Committee

The Housing Advisory Committee was disbanded in 1984 or 1985. When a need arises for a task-oriented forum to discuss a particular issue or provide a recommendation to a decision-making body or program agency, the appropriate group of persons is convened and action is taken. Limited staff resources and seasonally-related housing issues makes year-round staff support of an on-going committee infeasible.

- Coordinate housing efforts with public and private sectors

On-going. See many of the above specific comments.

- Revise the Housing Element as needed

On-going. Revisions will be undertaken as needed or in conformance with all State requirements, whichever is appropriate.

Summary of Programs from 1984 - 1989

Specific numeric goals were not attained and several activities were not initiated or completed as outlined in the 1984 Housing Element. Below is a very brief discussion of difficulties or obstacles that were encountered that precluded full compliance with outlined goals and objectives.

1. Lack of available funding. There have been dramatic decreases in State and Federal funding for a wide spectrum of housing and housing-related programs in the past few years. Unfortunately, limited growth and a restricted economic base locally did not allow for shifting the burden to the community beyond what has already occurred. Options for passing along costs to citizens of the community are limited in terms of what is legally and realistically possible.

2. Staffing limitations. With the economic base of the community, for all practical purposes, fixed throughout the 1980s, there has been little increase in the General Fund resources available with which to implement the many strategies and activities outlined in the 1984 Housing Element. Recognition must be given to staffing limitations.

3. Conflicts in priorities. There is the opportunity for many conflicts in priorities to arise during the course of the residential development process. For example, there is the issue of affordability which must be balanced against the assessment of development fees that increase the cost of the unit; however, by the same token, if the fees are not collected from the developer, and most likely passed on to prospective home buyers, then the community as a whole must absorb the cost of development. Trade-offs between priorities that deal with environmental quality, neighborhood quality and livability, adequate infrastructure, protection of the long-term public investment, affordability and adequate numbers and types of housing must be made. A given emphasis in one direction caused changes in staff work programs and priorities to the extent that other strategies were dropped from the list of active projects. Given limited staff and budgetary resources, this flexibility is essential so that adjustments can be readily made when community values shift or change.

4. Institutional barriers. These include barriers and obstacles that are beyond the outright control of the City. Examples include financial, which involves techniques and methods of property appraisal, loan and insurance underwriting criteria, etc. Other barriers include: the history of low-density development in the community and a strong very traditional preference for detached single family units on individual parcels of land; attitudes and perceptions that the community has relative to low cost housing; regulations and restrictions at all levels of government relative to the development of land, etc. The City has made every effort to ensure that any institutionalized barrier or obstacle which is in their control has been evaluated with regard to costs versus benefits.

5. Housing production costs. The cost of providing housing and housing-related programs has escalated in recent years while the funding available to the City has decreased; couple this with increasing demand and the City is faced, along with other housing developers, with the difficult position of producing or stimulating the production of affordably priced units.

6. Number of strategies, activities and programs. The 1984 Housing Element listed more than forty strategies, activities or programs to be pursued. This magnitude is unrealistic given staffing levels and work programs; efforts must not be so diluted that the true issues related to housing go unattended.

HOUSING GOALS

1. To provide a wide range of adequate, affordable housing for all economic segments of the City.
2. To improve and preserve the unique character of existing neighborhoods.
3. To meet the goals set forth by the Southern California Association of Governments for the City's Fair Share Housing needs.

HOUSING OBJECTIVES

1. Improve 40 dwelling units annually: includes public and private efforts for maintenance and home repairs for otherwise structurally sound units.
2. Rehabilitate 20 dwelling units annually; includes public and private efforts involved in undertaking rehabilitation of major structural elements that are no longer sound (walls, roof, electrical and plumbing systems, etc.)
3. Remove 10 dwelling units annually from the housing inventory; includes public and private efforts involved in eliminating dilapidated dwelling units.
4. Address 10% of the Urgent Very Low Income Household and Persons need annually. The overall existing urgent need is defined as those currently residing households or persons with incomes below the poverty level.

56	Female headed households below poverty level
100	Elderly headed households below poverty level (39 assisted in 1989)
46	Large family households below poverty level
29	Work disabled persons below poverty level
10	Handicapped persons w/no access to transportation below poverty level

241 Total Urgent Very Low Income Households and Persons Need

5. Address 10% of the Low Income Paying too Much for Housing Need annually. SCAG indicates that the existing need for affordable housing is a total of 532 low income households that pay more than 30% of gross income for housing expenses. Assuming that the above households and persons with incomes below poverty level are a subset of this group, this leaves a remainder of 291 low income households that are paying too much for housing (532 - 241 = 291).

6. Assist 12 homeless cases per month, one of which is a transitional homeless person or family. This is applicable for the winter months. A lower level of assistance will be provided during the summer months.
7. Conserve the existing 433 affordable housing units now in the City. This includes the units as listed in the "Existing Affordable Housing Programs" section of this Element as well as the 60 mobile homes located in the City.
8. Construct 20 new units annually for very low and low income households and persons. Includes public and private efforts.

HOUSING POLICIES

1. Improve, preserve and rehabilitate existing sub-standard and/or aging housing.

Program 1-A: Enforce all City codes regarding the maintenance of existing housing.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe Department of Development Services

Financing: Department Budget

Schedule: Ongoing

Program 1-B: Use all available subsidies (grants, loans, etc.) to rehabilitate sub-standard owner and renter occupied low income housing in the City.

Responsible Agencies: City of Blythe Department of Development Services, City of Blythe Redevelopment Agency, County of Riverside, California Department of Housing and Community Development

Financing: Department Budget, Redevelopment Funds, Community Development Block Grant Funds

Schedule: Ongoing

Program 1-C: In the event that low income housing is eliminated for any reason, require the owner of the land to relocate those residents affected.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe, City Redevelopment Agency

Financing: Private Funds

Schedule: Ongoing

2. Ensure that sufficient residential lands are available to satisfy the future needs of the City.

Program 2-A: Designate sufficient appropriate residential lands on the Land Use and Zoning maps for all types of housing, providing the mix necessary for the diverse economic mix in the City.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe Department of Development Services

Financing: Department Budget

Schedule: 1989 (now underway)

3. Guarantee non-discriminatory access to all housing, regardless of income, race, religion, sex, marital status or national origin.

Program 3-A: Protect the long-term affordability of housing by explicitly stating in conditions of project approval what special vehicles or tools will be used to screen applicants.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe Department of Development Services

Financing: Department Budget

Schedule: Ongoing

Program 3-B: Investigate the use of Community Development Block Grant funds to help finance low and moderate income projects.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe Department of Development Services, City Redevelopment Agency.

Financing: Department Budget, Community Development Block Grant funds

Schedule: Ongoing. City presently receives CDBG funds from Riverside County as a pass-through entitlement.

Program 3-C: Develop a program to most cost-effectively use Housing Fund monies for the development of low income housing, whether in the Redevelopment area or elsewhere in the City limits.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe Redevelopment Agency

Financing: 20% set-aside Housing Fund

Schedule: 1990.

Program 3-D: Establish a program by which a developer can receive a maximum 25% density bonus if the proposed project provides at least 25% of its units for low and very low income housing; or at least 50% of the project will be restricted to persons meeting minimum age and/or income standards.

Responsible Agencies: City of Blythe Department of Development Services and City Redevelopment Agency.

Financing: Department Budget

Schedule: Approved conceptually. Zoning ordinance to be amended in late 1989 or early 1990.

Program 3-E: Provide for the special needs of the elderly through requirements in the zoning ordinances.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe Department of Development Services.

Financing: Department Budget

Schedule: 1989

Program 3-F: In conformance with Sections 6582.1 and 6582.2 of the California Government Code, the City will establish zoning and building code procedures and requirements for second units in single family and multi-family zones.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe Department of Development Services
Financing: Department Budget
Schedule: 1989

Program 3-G: Monitor the needs of the homeless in the City so that an appropriate shelter site, sufficient to house the anticipated need in the City, can be set aside in the future when necessary. The City should consider providing the funds for the construction of this shelter through public funding, in conjunction with the County of Riverside and private relief organizations.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe Department of Development Services
Financing: Private Funds
Schedule: On-going

4. Preserve existing numbers of mobile homes and consider proposals for additional well designed parks at affordable rates.

Program 4-A: The City will implement a program to maintain existing numbers of mobile homes and promote the development of new units, to assure affordable rates.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe Department of Development Services
Financing: Department Budget
Schedule: 1989

Program 4-B: If a mobile home park is converted or destroyed, the owner of the land will be required to relocate residents to comparable accommodations, in accordance with applicable State law.

Responsible Agency: City of Blythe Department of Development Services
Financing: Private Funding
Schedule: Ongoing

RECREATION ELEMENT

Background

Parks and Recreation issues are incorporated in the General Plan under the heading of Recreation Element. In addition to the discussion of parks, open space and recreation facilities, the Recreation Element also addresses the need and design parameters for bike paths, and hiking and equestrian trails. This Element is, therefore, divided into two distinct primary components: Parks and Trails. Since each portion of this element clearly has differing requirements and parameters, two separate discussions have been included.

PARKS

Park open space, recreation facilities and organized sports are important community traditions in the City of Blythe. These facilities and activities have been basic to strengthening the fabric and cohesiveness of the community. Beyond the city limits the resources of the Colorado River and Colorado Desert have greatly enhanced the quality of life for the residents of the Palo Verde Valley and the entire Southwest region. The importance of these two resources and their long-term viability cannot be overstated. Within the City residents benefit from substantial existing open space, park and recreational facilities. The Blythe Municipal Golf Course, located on the Mesa northwest of the City is also an important community and regional recreational resource.

Parks, open space areas, and recreational facilities are essential components defining the quality of life of a community. Park and recreation areas provide accessible open space areas and direct contact with the natural environment. Recreation has been termed refreshment for the body, the spirit, and the mind. The preservation of park and open space areas becomes increasingly important in urban settings where development and associated traffic and noise tend to remove and isolate residents from the natural environment. The planning of parks, open space, and recreation facilities requires consideration of the types and intensities of uses the facilities are intended to serve.

The heightened interest for open space and recreation amenities within apartment complexes and planned residential developments (PRDs) has lead to the design of these facilities in new multi-family residential developments. Developments are planned around ponds, pools, tennis courts and landscaped open space areas. Whether residents of private communities or single family neighborhoods, City residents are avid walkers and bicyclers and can be seen taking full advantage of all park and open space areas in the City.

Existing Parks/Facilities

Miller Park

Miller Park encompasses about 11.5 acres at the southeast corner of 14th Avenue and S. Lovekin Boulevard. Park facilities consist of a softball field with night-lighting, two soccer fields (occur within the softball field), children play areas, basketball court, lighted sand volley ball court, covered picnic areas and bar-b-q pits, RV dump station and potable water, restroom facilities and approximately 50 parking spaces. Packing sheds and other agri-business activities and land uses occur on three sides of the park and generate related traffic consisting of a large percentage of large trucks and trailers.

Todd Park

Todd Park encompasses approximately 20 acres, extending north from Barnard Street to Chanslor Way, and from Broadway west to Main Street. Todd Park includes the 5,600 square foot Blythe Community Center located at the southwest corner of Broadway and Chanslor Way. Other facilities at the park include two major and one minor league baseball fields, two pee-wee and senior baseball fields, horseshoe courts, basketball courts, band stand (gazebo), extensively landscaped open space areas, parking and restroom facilities. The City also operates a small maintenance shop and storage yard within the park. The park's baseball facilities are currently being upgraded and will continue to be an important community tradition to welcome new families and visitors to Blythe.

Appleby Park

The Appleby Park encompasses approximately 4 acres, occurring immediately south of Donlon Street, between South Second and South Third Streets. The park is bounded on the south by the Appleby Elementary School, which extends south to 14th Avenue. The Appleby Park facility serves the immediate single family neighborhoods occurring generally between Broadway and South Seventh Street, and south of Interstate-10. Facilities at the park include a small softball field, swings and various types of playground equipment, and open space areas.

Pocket Parks

Engevick Park, Avenue "A" Park and Bommer Park

The Engevick Park is located at the northwest corner of Carlton Avenue and Barnard Street. The Avenue "A" Park is located mid-block on Avenue "A", between 8th and 9th Streets. The Bommer Park is located at the northeast corner of 8th Street and Barnard Street. These small parcels each encompass a single family lot, are landscaped and have equipped play areas, and are good examples of "pocket parks". They provide common play areas for neighborhood children and meeting places for parents and neighbors.

These types of "pocket parks" can also be passive facilities that have been designed and constructed to convey the character of the neighborhood and provide a pleasing landscaped open space area to sit in, walk through and view. Both the City and private developers could participate in the development of these parks and the expense of maintenance might be addressed through the establishment of a landscape maintenance assessment district.

Other Public Facilities

The open space and recreation facilities of the Palo Verde Unified School District, and also the Palo Verde Valley Community College, provide important and valuable recreation opportunities for children and adults during non-school use hours. Community facilities of this type include swimming pool, track and field facilities, basketball courts, tennis courts, playground equipment, playing fields and substantial amounts of landscaped open space areas.

Blythe Municipal Golf Course

The Blythe Municipal Golf Course is sited on the Mesa formed where the alluvial fan of the Big Maria Mountains meets the incised Colorado River bed approximately 4 miles north-west of the city limits. The golf course area of the mesa rises about 150 feet above the valley floor. The City owned and operated facility is a moderately difficult 6,800 yard championship course and constitutes a significant community asset, broadening and enhancing the range of recreational activities available to City residents and regional visitors.

Regional and County Recreation Resources

The City of Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley are blessed with two major regional open space/recreation resource areas, the Colorado River and the Colorado Deserts. The County of Riverside also plays an active role in making RV camping and river-oriented facilities available for rental year-round. The County owns and, in some instances, operates park and recreation facilities along the Colorado River. The County General Plan also identifies primary and secondary riding and hiking trails, primary trails occurring along the Colorado River and secondary trails occurring just east of the Blythe Airport. A brief description of regional and County facilities and resources is provided below.

Colorado River Resource Area

The Colorado River provides important open space and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors of the Palo Verde Valley. In addition to encouraging the development of Recreational Vehicle (RV) and camping facilities, the river attracts a large number of day-users who either live locally, stay in area motels, or camp in other areas of the Valley.

Hunting, fishing, water sports, nature watching and other "passive" enjoyment of the river resource are all affected by the river's level. Drought conditions may somewhat limit river use. Future allocations of Colorado River water upstream of the Palo Verde Valley further threaten to reduce the river's level and its viability as a recreation resource and habitat for fish, birds and other animals. By contrast, flooding can also occur on the river, as it did in 1983, threatening structures and other improvements.

Colorado Desert Resource Area

The Palo Verde Valley occurs in the Colorado subarea of the Sonoran Desert. The Sonoran Desert is the richest and most varied of all desert plant and animal habitats. The Palo Verde Valley region would appear to typify and excel in these qualities, further enhancing the resource area with dramatic volcanic mountains encircling the expansive sense of space on the valley floor.

The unique and powerful effect of the desert environment attracts a wide range of users including RV and open air campers, hikers and equestrians, gem and mineral enthusiasts, photographers and artists, and all types of nature lovers. Amateur archaeologists, biologists and geologists also frequent these desert lands where geological structures and resources, and wildlife are quite varied, conspicuous and accessible.

Mayflower Park

Mayflower County Park, located on the Colorado River northeast of the City, is approximately 25 years old, but has seen substantial growth in the past six years. Mayflower Park, located immediately north of 6th Avenue, presently provides 188 RV spaces, of which 152 are full service (electric and water) and 36 are "primitive" sites.

Amenities at the Park include a swimming beach on a lagoon, limited boat launch facilities, RV storage, septic tanks, dump station and restrooms. Limited boat launch facilities and the lack of significant commercial services appear to make Mayflower Park less competitive during the summer season. There are plans to expand the number of RV sites. The Park is entirely operated by the County and volunteers.

McIntyre Park

McIntyre Park is about 20 years old, and has been quite successful in attracting business, both during the season and in the summer months. The park has a total of 185 RV spaces, of which 125 are full-service and 60 are "primitive." Amenities at the Park include an excellent swimming beach which attracts many visitors, year-round boat launch, mini-general store of approximately 1,500 square feet, gas and propane sales, ski rentals, septic tanks and dump station, and 100 spaces of RV storage. A substantial potential for growth would allow the doubling of RV and other facilities and could increase high season business by 200%, and summer business by 80%.

Blythe Marina

As with Mayflower and McIntyre Parks, Blythe Marina is owned by Riverside County and completely operated by a concessionaire. The Blythe Marina has 250 RV spaces, of which 75 spaces are serviced with electricity, water and sewer; 100 spaces with electric and water; and 75 primitive spaces. During the season, occupancy is at 100%, with summer occupancy being about 50%. Amenities include a swimming beach on a lagoon, year-round boat launch facilities, swimming pool, recreation room, convenience store (2,000 square feet), laundry and gasoline sales on the dock. As with the other parks, there is substantial potential for growth: approximately 75% of the current level of business during the summer and about 150% during the season.

Future City Park Facilities

As future parks and recreation facilities are planned, consideration must be given to those who use the parks. Parks also play an important part in attracting the non-resident "snow bird", tourist and visitor. The City's parks and open space areas should illustrate the pride and enjoyment of the City's residents for the rural desert community environment.

Table III-15
Standards for Recreational Areas

TYPE OF PARK AREA	ACRES/1000 POP.	SITE SIZE IDEAL/MIN.	RADIUS OF AREA SERVED
PLAYGROUNDS	1.5	4 AC./2 AC.	0.5 MILES
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	2.0	10 AC./5 AC.	0.5 MILES
PLAY FIELDS	1.5	15 AC./10 AC.	1.5 MILES
COMMUNITY PARKS	3.5	100 AC./40 AC.	2.0 MILES
DISTRICT PARKS	3.5	200 AC./100 AC.	3.0 MILES
REGIONAL PARKS	15.0	500+ AC./VARIES	10. MILES

The Quimby Act

The City is empowered by the Quimby Act (California Government Code, Section 66477) to establish a formula and levy a fee or another type of mitigation to assure the provision of adequate park and recreation facilities. The Quimby Act states that the City may require the dedication of land or impose a fee in lieu of land, or a combination of both. The dedication of lands or the payment of in-lieu fees is specifically directed to the provision of park or recreation areas, and is applied as a condition of approval of a tentative map or plan approval. The Quimby Act further states that the amount of land dedicated or fees paid are to be based on residential densities approved on a tentative map or development plan (Conditional Use Permit or Plot Plan).

If the City is to provide for the increased demand to be generated for park and recreational facilities it will be necessary to establish a mechanism by which fees or land (or both) may be collected by the City. The rural environment does not replace the need for these vitally important facilities, which as discussed above, are essential to encourage social interaction and community cohesion. The City is required by state law to collect impact fees based upon actual projected needs. And these funds and or lands must be utilized within five years from their collection. An impact assessment should be prepared to determine the level of mitigation needed to assure adequate parks and recreation facilities in the future. Quimby Act fees can also be used to assure the coordinated development of recreational activities and programs, which will optimize the use of these valuable community assets.

PARKS GOAL

1. Assure the promotion and enhancement of City and regional parks, recreation and open space resources which provide opportunities for healthful, active, cultural and aesthetic enjoyment of the physical environment.

PARKS POLICIES

1. The City shall take an active role in the preservation of the Colorado Desert Resource Area and the right of access without undue restriction by governmental regulation.
2. The City shall take an active role in preserving the viability of the Colorado River Resource Area through the coordination with state, federal and other appropriate agencies.
3. The City shall cooperate and coordinate with and encourage the County of Riverside on proposed development within the Colorado Desert and River Resources Areas, and the provision of future regional park facilities.
4. Enhanced accessibility shall be included in the planning of all park areas, recognizing the needs of the disabled, senior citizens and others with special needs.
5. The City shall determine and select appropriate types and locations of future park, recreation, and open space areas, which shall be delineated in the General Plan.
6. The City shall levy adequate parkland fees and/or secure appropriate lands to establish, improve and maintain the city park system, in conformance with the Quimby Act.
7. The City shall develop a master plan of parks and open space development for the utilization of park development fees and dedicated lands collected under the Quimby Act or donated to the City.
8. Pocket park development shall be encouraged as a means of effectively distributing public park or open space lands throughout the City to provide special neighborhood character, open space and recreation opportunities to residents and visitors.
9. Utilizing the 1972 Landscape and Lighting Maintenance Act, the Mello-Roos Public Improvements Act or other appropriate mechanism, all new public park and open space areas shall be placed within a landscape maintenance assessment district to assure the long-term maintenance and operation of these facilities without further burdening the City General Fund.
10. City shall actively pursue the development and implementation of a master plan of Quechan Park, which should provide for the development of a marina, RV park, day-use and other appropriate recreation and commercial support facilities, including hotel/motel facilities.
11. City shall pursue the development of municipal boat launch and river front beach facilities along the Colorado River.
12. The City shall analyse the economic feasibility of upgrading Municipal Golf Course facilities, scheduling fee increases and promoting the use of the golf course to optimize the City's investment.

13. The City shall encourage the development of RV park facilities of quality design and construction within the City limits.

TRAILS

Background

Opportunities for bicycling, horseback riding, jogging and hiking can decrease vehicular transportation demands and increase recreational activities. Bicycles account for 15 percent or more of daily trip making in many areas with favorable terrain and climatic conditions (as exist throughout much of Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley). Nationwide, it is estimated that 40 percent of the population owns bicycles. The nationwide bicycle ownership percentage applied to the City's ultimate population projection of 60,000 (excluding the Sphere of Influence) indicates that 24,000 bicycles could exist for utilitarian and/or recreational use. The three classifications of bikeways are as follows:

Bikeway Classes

Class I Bikeway - (Bike Path or trail) Provides a completely separated right of way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles. Crossflows of pedestrians and vehicles are minimized. In Blythe, this class of bikeway will occur within parkway areas and designed to be eight feet wide and to meander.

Class II Bikeway - (Bike Lane) Provides a restricted right of way designated for the exclusive use or semi-exclusive use of bicycles with through-travel by motorists or pedestrians prohibited, but with crossflows of pedestrian and motor traffic permitted.

Class III Bikeway - (Bike Route) Provides for a right of way designated by signage or permanent markings with shared use of pedestrians and/or motorists.

Safety

Safety issues include conflicts with vehicles, assault vulnerability on trails with low use, conflicts among trail users (bicycles/ horses/pedestrians), and bicycle security at the non-home end of the trip.

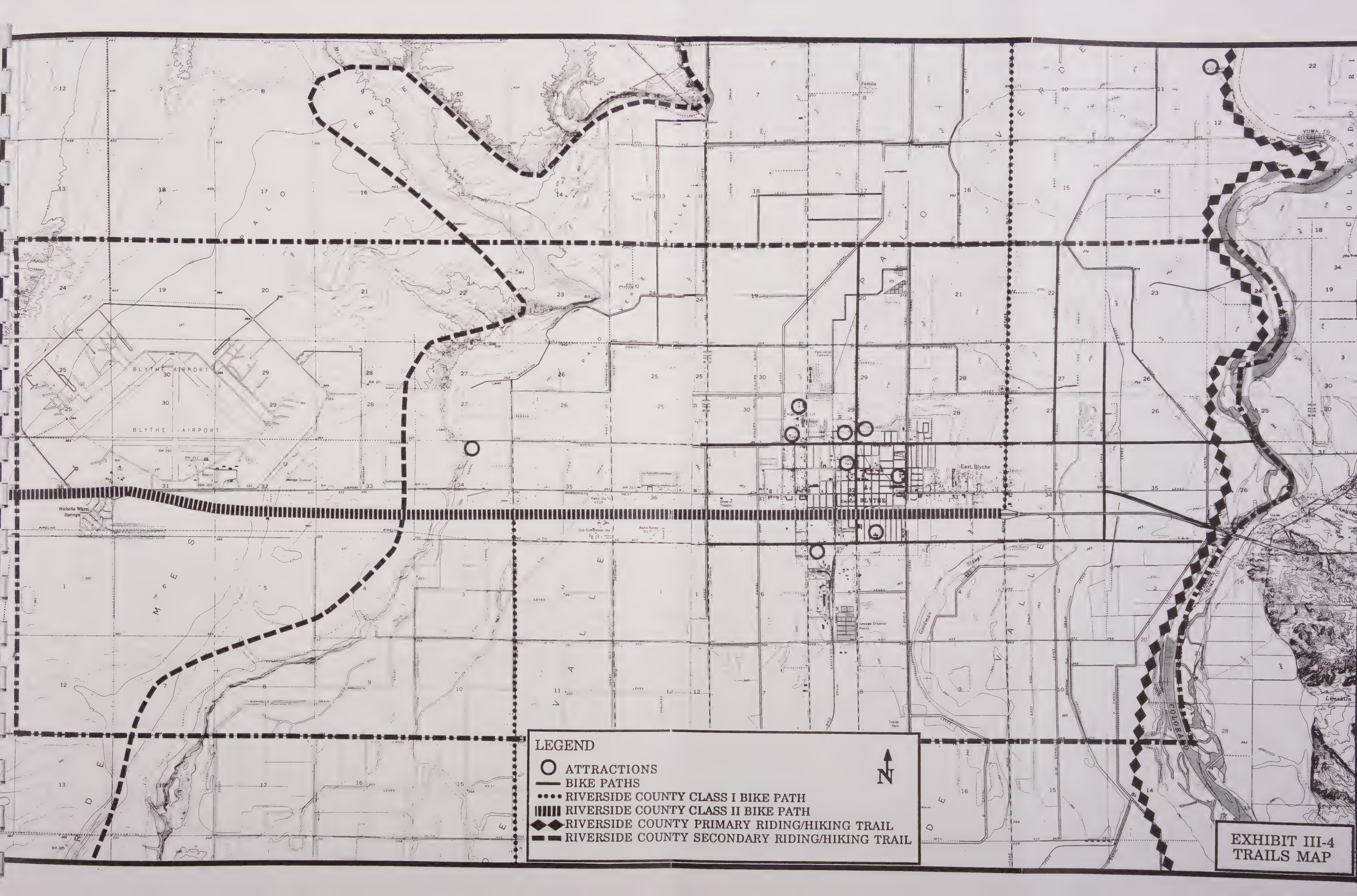
Conflicts with vehicles may occur when trails are on-street, or when off-street trails cross streets and driveways at grade. On-street bikeways (Class II and III facilities) provide communication of bicycle traffic to motorists, yet no real protection to bicyclists. Class II and III bikeways should be restricted to collector roadways with forecasted vehicular traffic well below available capacity, such as Barnard Street or Chanslor Way. On such trails, it is necessary to ensure that drainage/wastewater grates have slits oriented perpendicular to the lane.

Along off-street trails with low use, user safety is a concern. Trail security can be improved by providing a minimum width of 10 feet to allow maintenance, emergency and patrol vehicles to use the path; and by increasing the number of users by combining bicycle, equestrian and hiking trails.

The combining of uses on a trail introduces the potential for on-trail conflicts. In view of the average bicycle speed of 10 MPH on an even grade and 20 to 30 MPH on downhill grades, it is necessary to provide minimum width separations between opposing directions and between horses and hikers. The Institute of Transportation Engineers has documented widths for safe operation as noted below:

- Two-way off-street bike path-minimum paved width of 8 feet and a desirable width of 12 feet, plus a 2 foot graded width on each side.
- Two-way bike path with pedestrian use-minimum 2.5 foot horizontal separation (preferably more) between bicycles and pedestrians; plus a minimum 4 feet width for two way pedestrian use.

The minimum width for two-way equestrian paths is 8 feet, plus a minimum 2 foot width on each side. Typical cross-sections of the various trail combinations are illustrated in Exhibit III-5.



LEGEND

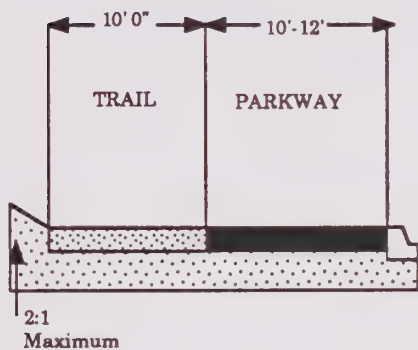
- **ATTRACTIONS**
- **BIKE PATHS**
- **RIVERSIDE COUNTY CLASS I BIKE PATH**
- ||||| **RIVERSIDE COUNTY CLASS II BIKE PATH**
- ◆◆◆ **RIVERSIDE COUNTY PRIMARY RIDING/HIKING TRAIL**
- — — **RIVERSIDE COUNTY SECONDARY RIDING/HIKING TRAIL**

N

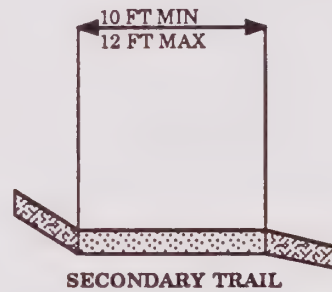
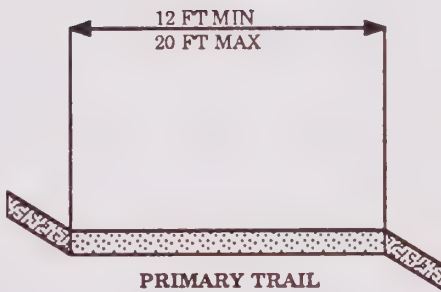
**EXHIBIT III-4
TRAILS MAP**

EXHIBIT III-5 TRAIL SECTIONS

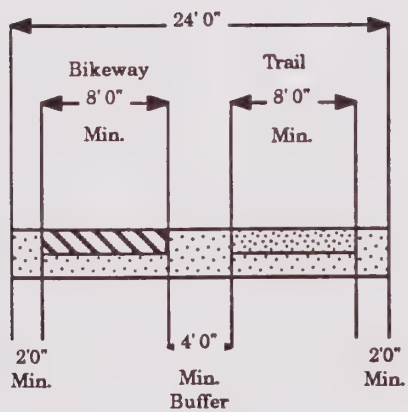
EQUESTRIAN TRAIL
ADJACENT TO PUBLIC STREET



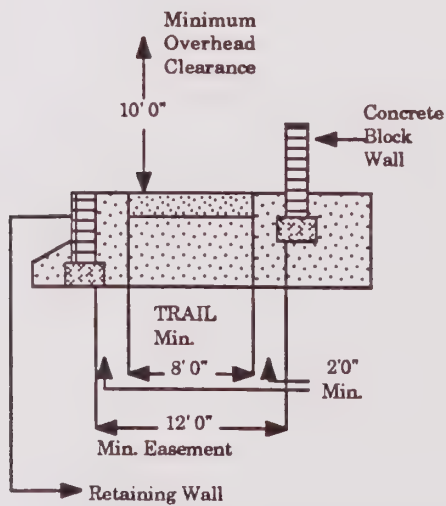
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY RIDING AND HIKING TRAILS



TRAIL DETAILS



TRAIL AND BIKEWAY COMBINATION



TRAIL ADJACENT TO
FENCE AND RETAINING WALL

8. Recognize the Colorado River Resource Area as a valuable open space and community resource, and encourage the preservation of its recreational trails.
9. Seek to develop trails and related limited facilities for horseback riding, hiking, non-motorized bicycling, and jogging along the Colorado River that inter-connects City, County and State parks and recreational areas, and provides linkage opportunities between open space and recreation areas.
10. As a condition for future improvements and/or development the City will procure a right-of-way in fee or an easement for the purpose of developing a bikeway and riding trail in those corridors so designated on the General Plan.
11. New residential developments that envision recreational land uses shall incorporate appropriate pedestrian and bike trail connections to the City-wide recreational system.
12. Future primary equestrian and hiking trails shall be developed within a right-of-way in fee or an easement with minimum width of twelve feet to a maximum width of twenty feet.
13. Secondary equestrian and hiking trails shall be developed within trail easements or rights-of-way of ten to twelve feet depending on the terrain.
14. Overhead clearance for equestrian trails shall be a minimum of ten feet.
15. The design standard for any Primary bikeway and equestrian trail combination shall be twenty-four feet so as to provide for adequate buffering between the two uses.
16. Where an equestrian trail is located between a fence and/or a retaining wall, a minimum standard of twelve feet will be required.
17. A standardized safe crossing sign to warn motorists of impending trail crossings shall be permanently installed and located in advance of all trail intersections with streets.
18. Trail signs shall be posted to indicate the name, destination and mileage where applicable and shall identify hazard areas and safety precautions. Signs shall be designed and placed in accordance with the standards of the City of Blythe.

COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

Background

The Community Design Element addresses many aspects and facets of urban design and land planning involved in the consideration of community design or urban planning issues. With a view to the future, new development must be balanced with the existing urban, agriculture and natural environments of the Palo Verde Valley. Community image and character may be taken for granted by long-time residents of a community, however, the new resident and tourist/visitor views the community from a more critical and selective perspective. Construction of new developments and the renovation of existing structures can positively or adversely affect the character and quality of the urban environment.

Present day development in the City of Blythe consists of a mix of older structures, with limited newer development having occurred in the last few years. Limited development standards affecting site planning and architectural and landscape architectural design have been incorporated into city codes and ordinances. These issues have only recently gotten a level of attention common in other cities in California where development activities have been increasing. While the goal of any community design program should be development which complements existing development, new development should not be unduly restrained from innovation.

Evaluation Criteria

A general set of criteria can be used to evaluate the relationship of new or renovated buildings within an area of existing development. These criteria are also applicable to new developments, particularly those which offer opportunities for broad master planning or significant impacts on the urban environment. Scenic, architectural, landscape architectural resources, and established character of an area provide basic design parameters for proposed development. Planning and design criteria assist in determining a new project's coherency of design and compatibility with the surrounding area. These standards include:

- * Building Height
- * Setbacks
- * Proportions of Massing
- * Pattern and Rhythm of Existing & Proposed Structures
- * Roof Types
- * Surface Color and Texture
- * Building Projections
- * Architectural Details
- * Landscape Architecture Treatment

Building Proportions, Heights and Setbacks

Building proportions, heights and setbacks play a critical role in community design. Building height in the City is currently limited to two stories in residential development. Given the lack of significant topographic features in the City, building height, in regards to viewshed protection, is an important issue. Due to the cost of land and the expense associated with engineering taller structures, future building heights will probably be limited to two story and it is appropriate to establish this limit by policy as a means of preserving the predominantly low profile of the City's buildings.

Distant mountain views are available in almost all directions, and the preservation of the sense of space and openness can also be affected by building setbacks; that is, the distance of the building from the public right-of-way. Setbacks should be compatible with surrounding development and the available viewsheds. Site planning should enhance the buildings appearance without allowing the development to dominate other buildings, the streetscape or the natural viewshed. In some instances, however, zero lot line development may occur within planned residential developments, where duplex or multiple unit clusters subdivisions are proposed. Industrial park and shopping center development may also result in the application of zero lot lines.

The relationship of new development to the surrounding neighborhood and the Palo Verde Valley setting is also affected by the proportions of the proposed structures. Commercial buildings with the bulk and proportions of industrial warehouses will typically be incompatible with groupings of smaller commercial buildings. The height and width of building elevations should not be drastically out of character or scale with existing neighborhood development.

Pattern and Rhythm

Pattern, rhythm, and elements of natural and man-made scenes can range from harmonious to dissident in relationship. The recurrent alteration of peaks and slopes of distant mountains can be emulated and complemented in the design of building roof lines and in the spaces and solids of buildings. The lack of dominant land forms in the City may also allow a broader variety of roofline design. The development of pattern and rhythm establishes a theme when viewed in the context of surrounding development. Close to the buildings, pedestrians should be provided a varied integration of structure and landscaping to soften and tie the structural element to the natural one. The rhythmic pattern in new buildings and landscape treatment should complement and integrate with established and aesthetically valuable structures and the surrounding natural environment.

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Building Roofing And Massing
Emulate Mountain Forms And
Allows Views



Thoughtful Massing Of Buildings
Retains Scenic Views



Improper Massing Blocks Views

Incongruent Building Massing And
Elevations Disrupt Continuity

Roof Types and Materials

Roof types, designs, treatments and materials can have a wide range of effects on the urban landscape. Not only the architectural aspects of roofs, but also the "after thought" application of roof-mounted heating/air conditioning and other equipment, affect the overall design and can seriously degrade an otherwise pleasing building. Roof types range from flat to multiple arrays of hipped roofs and can provide a variety of contrasting and imitative treatment. Screening of roof-mounted mechanical equipment is seldom a complement to building architecture.

Surface Texture and Color

The surface texture and color of buildings can have a significant impact on their compatibility with each other. The emergence of radical architectural styles in the last few years has expanded the range of acceptability in the mix and juxtaposition of building texture and color. Surface texture differs from pattern and rhythm in that texture is provided on a substantially reduced scale and does not act alone in creating a strong effect. Color, however, can be used as a strong design element that is equal in effect to architectural pattern or massing.

Styles change with time and while the use of strong color may play a dominant role in a structure's design, color is much easier to change once development has occurred than other design elements. The use of texture ranges from smooth adobe-type stucco to split-face concrete aggregate block. As with other elements of design, texture must be used carefully so as to complement the overall design while being compatible with surrounding development.

Building Projections and Architectural Detail

City policy regarding building projections and architectural detail can enhance the community's design. Building projections and other architectural details play important functional and aesthetic roles in a building's efficiency as shelter as well as its appearance. In addition to providing screening from direct summer sun and privacy, projections and architectural detail also affect how well the building harmonizes with surrounding development. Development along Hobsonway clearly illustrates the impacts of varying and uncoordinated application of awnings and covered walk-ways. Styles, and particularly projections and details which clash and overtly contrast with surrounding buildings, will preclude coherent design in the downtown commercial district.

Site Planning

The value and importance of site planning and plan review can not be overestimated. Site planning involves the distribution of buildings, open space areas, parking and driveways over the site. It establishes the development's relationship to the street and surrounding lands. The impacts of site design, both functional and aesthetic, are difficult to visualize and assess without the development of a detailed site plan and building elevations. Together with building architecture, site planning is the critical design parameter determining the compatibility of proposed development or renovation with the existing development in the area and the character of the community.

Special Design Issues

In addition to the architectural character of community design, other elements must be addressed when considering the community as a whole. These elements include the major entry points of the city and important landmarks and focal points, which lend identity and character to the community. Landmarks or focal points may include natural, historical, or cultural areas of interest or importance to the community. They may also include monuments, special signage identifying the community or selected landscaping themes.

Examples of landscape architectural elements applied to community design include Todd Park with its monument signage and coherent landscaping plan. The use of stone, concrete and landscaping at the entrance of a single family subdivision on North Lovekin Blvd. is a good example of entry treatment. The planting of palm trees along Hobsonway also provides something of a backbone for additional streetscape enhancement. An example of a viable Hobsonway streetscape enhancement is found in the adopted Blythe Redevelopment Plan.

Other special design areas include the major entry points to the City, principally at the Interstate-10 interchanges., where important opportunities exist for establishing a good first impression for tourists and travelers alike. Entry points offer the opportunity to apply many of the elements of community design into a quality entry statement. The provision of thoughtful landscaping, signage, entry signage, special paving, and other identifiable treatments all lend character and identity to the City entry points.

Public and quasi-public facilities located within the City and its sphere-of-influence include telephone switching stations, natural gas pumping and other facilities, bulk petroleum products storage areas, city, county and CalTrans storage and maintenance

facilities. Most of these facilities include unsightly work and storage areas which should be screened so that these areas are not visible from public rights-of-way. The integration of landscaping into existing fencing is a first, affordable step for these users to help improve the image of the City.

The City of Blythe is faced with a broad range of community design issues which, if given serious and adequate attention, will include street signage, entry point monument signage, commercial signage, street lighting fixtures, curb and pavement treatment, median islands and streetscape treatment and landscaping. All new development should be required to provide as broad a range of community design enhancements as is practical.

COMMUNITY DESIGN GOAL

1. A community image and character which reflects the rural nature of the City, preserves and enhances the natural scenic quality of the area, and promotes the image of Blythe as a desert oasis for travelers, tourists and residents alike.

COMMUNITY DESIGN POLICIES

1. Develop community standards establishing architectural and design parameters for all future development which protect the visual resources, provide community cohesion and enhance the image of Blythe as a desert oasis for permanent and seasonal residents, highway travelers and tourists.
2. Vigorously implement the City Redevelopment Plan to eliminate physical and economic blight through the removal of deteriorated and functionally obsolete structures of neither historic nor aesthetic value.
3. Areas of special interest, including focal and entry points, scenic highway viewsheds, and landmarks, as identified in the General Plan, will receive special design treatment when part of a development proposal.
4. Enhance the Hobsonway commercial business district through facade, signage and other public and private improvements which follow design standards and architectural guidelines of the Blythe Redevelopment Project #1.
5. Comprehensive landscaping standards and guidelines shall be developed and implemented through the City Zoning Ordinance to create interest, beauty and character in all areas of the City.
6. Building heights shall be limited to two stories, unless the need, compatibility and appropriateness of additional stories is demonstrated.
7. Median islands and various pedestrian crossing treatments shall be integrated into streetscape design to enhance streetscape appearance and provide safer roadways

8. Sufficient buffering (including landscaping and walls) shall occur between residential and commercial or industrial lands.
9. Building facades, landscaping, paving, utilities and other components of the streetscape should be combined in a manner which creates a distinctive and pleasing environment and identity for residents and visitors.
10. Strengthen the pedestrian retail orientation of the Hobsonway business district by enhancing streetscape continuity characterized by strong visual image and clear pedestrian and vehicular amenities.
11. Integrated berms and walls or combinations of fencing and landscaping shall be encouraged to provide screening of storage and private areas, and as buffers between sensitive uses and traffic noise generators.

SCENIC HIGHWAYS ELEMENT

Background

Scenic resources are important environmental assets, which can be used to enhance the beauty of the community, or may be destroyed through thoughtless development and impose scars on the visual landscape. The Palo Verde Valley and the City of Blythe are surrounded by several varied and visually interesting mountain ranges, which are visible from anywhere in the Blythe area.

Ranges backdropping the City include the Palo Verde Mesa to the west and north, Big Maria Mountains to the north, Dome Rock, Trigo and Chocolate Mountains across the Colorado River in Arizona, and the McCoy and Chocolate Mountains to the northwest and southwest, respectively. The City occurs at an elevation of about 265. Surrounding mountain peaks visible from the City range to nearly 5,000 feet (Kofa Mountains).

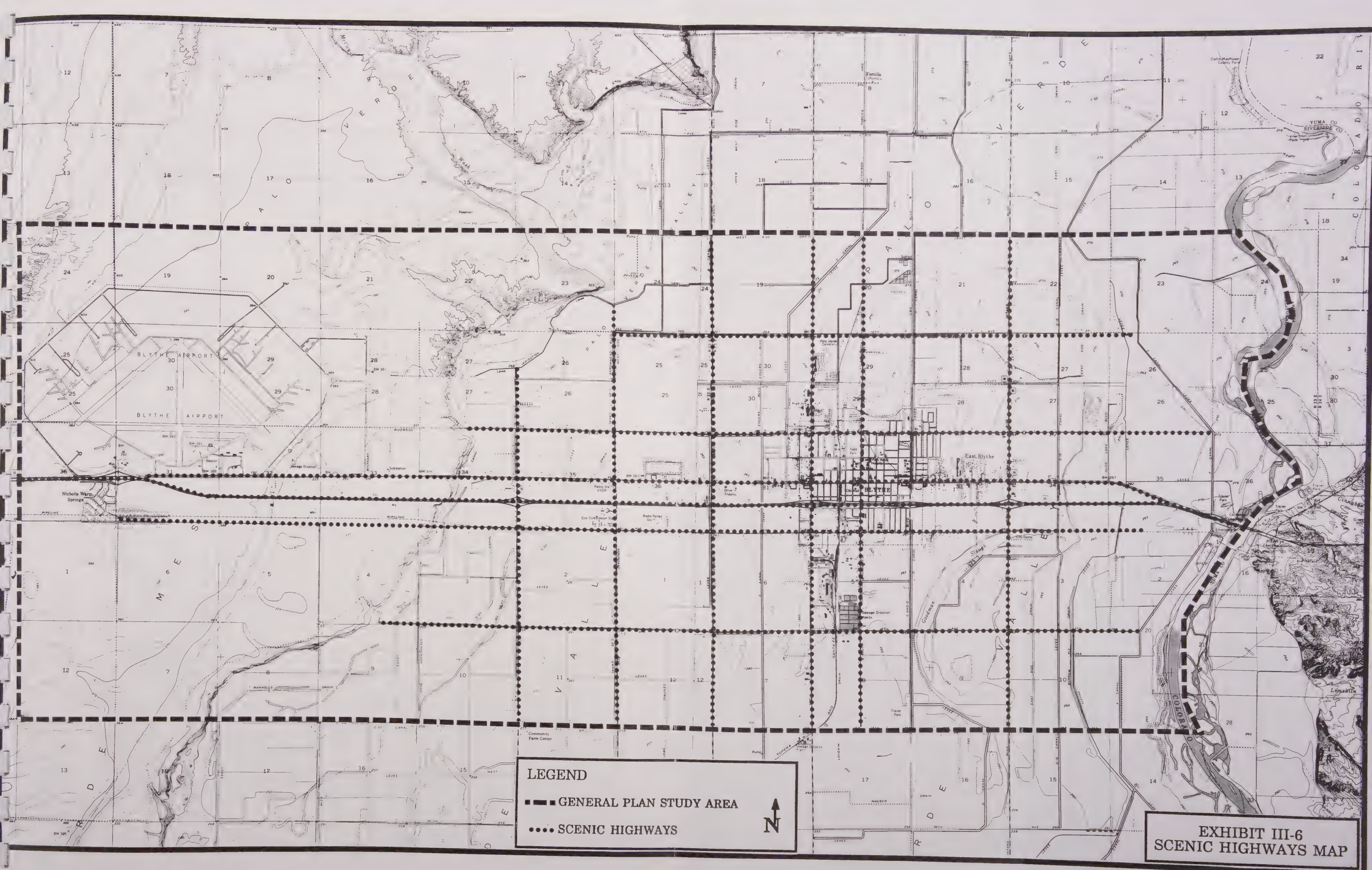
The flat floor of the Palo Verde Valley is patterned and colored by a constantly changing series of crops and cultivation. The strong linear quality of the farming grid is enhanced by the grid roadway system oriented to the points of the compass, which further the effect of expanding space. The broad visual impact that agricultural activity has on the area is an important part of the inherently pleasing viewshed of the Palo Verde Valley. Man-made elements including buildings of architectural, historic, or civil value are also to be considered as important parts of the scenic viewshed.

Scenic Highways Element

Over the past few decades the state and federal governments have encouraged local governments to protect the social and economic values of their scenic resources. The major roadways from which scenic resources are most visible and worthy of preservation and enhancement are prime candidates for inclusion in the Scenic Highways Element.

Candidate Roadways

Generally, all roadways designated as having a "Collector" capacity or greater, and which provide scenic viewsheds along their routes should be considered for inclusion in the Scenic Highways Element. River fronts, lagoons and other important bodies of water may also qualify for inclusion in the element as scenic corridors. High vantage points which provide greater panoramas of the area should also be considered for inclusion as important scenic resources which help identify the scenic corridors of the region.



Defining The Scenic Corridor Boundary

There are no precise delineations of boundaries on recognized and designated scenic corridors. Many viewsheds extend to the left and right of roadways and can encompass a full 360 degree view. The careful spacing of buildings and other structures, and the provision of additional setbacks along these corridors will retain a substantial portion of the viewshed offered. When development is proposed, the elements of the scenic viewshed and its relationship to existing and future development must be evaluated. Specific design standards may need to be imposed for particular scenic corridors, establishing building setbacks, height and types of streetscape treatment. These standards may be prescribed and implemented through a specific area where resources are most critical and of greatest value.

Scenic Highway Protection

Many types of issues or elements of community development can best serve as vehicles for scenic corridor protection and enhancement. The vigilant review of impacts and the feasibility of their mitigation involves the diligent analysis of site plans and elevations, earthwork and grading plans, utility lines and facilities, landscaping plans and materials, signage and outdoor advertising and issues regarding property maintenance.

The goal of the Scenic Highways Element is not only to identify and delineate scenic roadways and corridors. Element policies must also direct action to be taken through amendments to the City Zoning Ordinance or the preparation and adoption of a detailed "specific plan", establishing design standards, landscape palettes, etc.. Policies must also assure the protection and enhancement of scenic resources as a means of furthering the "quality of life" image of the City.

Land Use Planning and Policies

The type and location of various land uses developed adjacent to a scenic corridor will have use-specific and varied impacts on the scenic viewshed. The perspective of the viewer will also condition the impacts of development. As discussed in the Community Design Element, a broad range of development and building issues affect the degree of visual integration of development into the existing viewshed. Policies which control the development of the community's image should also function to preserve and enhance viewsheds in designated scenic corridors.

Signage and Outdoor Advertising

Signage and outdoor advertising are both conflicting and complementary elements of community planning. It is an essential element of the General Plan that it be internally consistent. It cannot establish opposing goals and policies which leave issues functionally unresolved by the plan. The importance of signage to the success of local retail businesses is obvious. On the other hand, the rampant and uncontrolled construction of signage and outdoor advertising poses a potentially serious threat to regional scenic resources and the long-term image associated with the City.

The height, location, and number of on-premises signs along or within scenic corridor viewsheds will affect the impacts of signage. Current (1988) City policy generously permits

of freeway billboards located along Interstate-10 west of Desert Center and in the Coachella Valley, and this policy has the potential to have equally detrimental effects on the viewshed. The City must strive to provide adequate signage while avoiding the potential adverse impacts possible from unnecessarily excessive development standards.

The potential for current signage and outdoor advertising standards to negatively impact I-10 and other important scenic corridors is substantial. Off-site signage should be restricted and not permitted throughout the City, consistent with Riverside County policies and standards. Policies of the Scenic Highway Element may redefine signage/outdoor advertising standards that better protect the City's scenic corridors.

Utility Infrastructure

Utility lines, substations, pumping stations, telephone switching stations, city wells, bulk fuel storage facilities, and other utility infrastructure are integral parts of urban development, which have been with us for many decades. Over the years, communities have undertaken various efforts to reduce the visual impacts and enhance the compatibility of these facilities. Methods used to mitigate the negative impacts of these facilities include undergrounding of electrical and telephone lines, providing decorative wall and/or landscape buffers around major facilities, and designing telephone and other equipment buildings in a style and treatment compatible with their surroundings.

Earthworks and Grading

Earthworks and grading activities can result in short and long-term negative impacts to scenic viewsheds. Examples of earthworks include construction of reservoirs, irrigation and drainage canals, berms, and protective drainage structures. Examples of grading activities which can pose a threat to visual resources include grading adjacent to or in the vicinity of the Colorado River, lagoons or backwaters, or along the slopes of the mesa.

Grading activities associated with development should be conducted in a timely manner. Grading should commence only when subsequent development is to immediately follow. Earthworks should be revegetated and restored to a "naturalized" condition, which also enhances resistance to erosion. Graded areas which are not to be immediately developed should be sown with an appropriate grass or plant mix and watered as necessary to establish erosion control planting. This action will stabilize surface soils and relieve the impact to the affected viewshed.

Landscape Treatment

A variety of landscape treatment opportunities are available, ranging from drought resistant desert plants to water-loving non-native imports of all shapes and sizes. The use of trees along scenic corridors is of particular concern, since trees offer the greatest potential for complementing or totally obstructing a scenic corridor's viewshed. The use of larger, more massive trees and shrubs (which frequently become trees) should generally be discouraged. Taller, but more open trees such as eucalyptus or cottonwood would be effective in occasional groupings. The use of Washingtonia and date palms can enhance the urban oasis image of the City, as it seems to be perceived by the tourist and highway traveler. These trees provide strong vertical accents punctuated at the top by rich green foliage. Views are still maintained and can be enhanced by the strong contrast of the vertical trunks.

Property Maintenance

The community, its lands and development, is a major contributor to the viewshed seen from scenic corridors. Roof mounted equipment and roof deterioration are particularly visible from the elevated grade of Interstate-10. At street level, yard and building maintenance and automobile parking and storage can create a visual nuisance or complement to the viewshed. Screening of roof-mounted equipment and the enforcement of Building Codes can do much to enhance the viewshed provided by existing development.

Riverside County Scenic Highways

The County of Riverside does not currently have any Official County Scenic Highways, although several routes have been identified and determined to be Eligible County Scenic Highways. In the Palo Verde Valley area these include State Highway 95 (Intake Boulevard) and U.S. Interstate-10.

The designated portion of State Highway 95 extends north from I-10 to the San Bernardino County line. This route parallels the Colorado River and passes by the Intaglios constructed by pre-historic indians. U.S. Interstate-10 has been designated from State Highway 62 west of Desert Hot Springs to the Colorado River. The County General Plan cites the mountains and the panoramic views of the deserts as the route's primary visual resource. County policies call for the preservation and protection of scenic vistas and visual features.

The County also encourages the integration of public sidewalks, trails and bike paths within the scenic corridor rights-of-way. County policy prohibits the development of off-premises signage where visible from a designated scenic highway. The County also recommends that outdoor signage be the minimum needed to provide adequate business identification, controlling color, lighting, height and area.

Proposed Scenic Highways

Several roadways and scenic corridors are proposed for designation as scenic routes in the City General Plan. In addition to the above discussed County designated Interstate-10 and State Highway 95, several other roadways and corridors are proposed for designation. In all instances, these roadways and corridors extend beyond the city limits and through the Sphere-of-Influence.

Interstate-10

Hobsonway

Lovekin Boulevard

Neighbors Boulevard

8th Avenue

14th Avenue

18th Avenue

Intake Boulevard

Broadway

DeFrain Boulevard

Arrowhead Boulevard

10th Avenue

16th Avenue

Colorado River Corridor

Interstate-10

U.S. Interstate-10 is the critical scenic route affecting and conveying the image of the City more than any other roadway. While CalTrans has made some effort over the years to

identified which should be brought to the attention of CalTrans. The median strips are almost entirely barren and lack any kind of landscape treatment. The treatment at the interchanges, especially Lovekin and Intake Boulevards, is barren and neglected and makes a poor impression.

Travelers may not realize that these neglected areas are primarily the responsibility of CalTrans and will nonetheless be consciously or unconsciously affected by the appearance of these critical areas. The existing landscaping materials used by CalTrans include pine, palo verde, eucalyptus, rhus lancia, Brazil and California peppers, bottle brush, and oleander.

These materials provide a good basis for the thoughtful application of additional landscape materials. The center divider could be greatly enhanced through the use of a mix of groupings of pines and palms, with smaller japanese oleander. Groupings of dwarf common oleander could also be cost-effectively used. The route could be made impressive in a cost-effective manner and without negatively impacting the viewshed or commercial signage.

Major Entry and Focal Points

There is presently no clear or obvious difference in character or quality of development between portions of the unincorporated "urbanized" areas and those of the City. Also of concern are the I-10 interchanges where travelers may have there first and only impression of the City and its character. These "entry points" offer opportunities for the City to establish its identity and character and impose its image as a community on the visiting traveler or tourist.

Focal points can be any location, including important corners or locations of parks, civic buildings, schools, historic buildings or key locations within the core commercial district. Focal points may call for monument signs, locations of monuments or memorials, special streetscape and landscape treatments, and other special treatments. Similar to the pocket park concept, these focal points reinforce the community's sense of identity and character.

SCENIC HIGHWAYS GOAL

1. Preserve and enhance the scenic resources of the community as viewed from major roadways and open space corridors, as an essential element of the outward sign of the community's image and character.

SCENIC HIGHWAYS POLICIES

1. Scenic highways and corridors identified in the General Plan shall be analysed and reviewed prior to development to assure the preservation of scenic resources.

2. Develop and implement standards for viewshed analysis to assure the preservation and enhancement of natural scenic resources. Areas of special concern include but are not limited to parkways, building setbacks, pad elevations, building height and landscape treatment.
3. Develop a preliminary landscape concept for Interstate-10 and coordinate and cooperate with CalTrans in the implementation of a landscape augmentation program.
4. Coordinate and confer with Riverside County, the California State Lands Commission and other appropriate agencies regarding development adjacent to the Colorado River and the preservation of this important scenic corridor.
5. The City shall amend the Zoning Ordinance restricting the development of off-premises signs in all areas of the City and shall coordinate and cooperate with Riverside County in their restriction in the City's sphere-of-influence.
6. The City shall amend the Zoning Ordinance reducing the size and height of on-premises sign to dimensions which adequately identify the place of business without unduly impacting scenic resources.
7. Electrical lines, telephone lines and cable TV lines shall be placed underground in all new development, and shall be encouraged wherever possible in developed areas.
8. Electrical substations, pumping stations, city wells, bulk fuel storage facilities, and similar utility infrastructure shall be screened from public view through the provision of decorative walls, landscape buffers, or other acceptable means of screening.
9. The City shall utilize the Uniform Building, Plumbing, and Electrical Codes, and any other applicable City codes and ordinances to assure the adequate maintenance of buildings and improvements occurring within scenic corridors.
10. Where appropriate and feasible, equestrian, pedestrian and/or bicycle paths, as shown on the Trails Map, and other compatible public recreation facilities shall be incorporated into scenic roadway corridors.
11. Encourage the implementation of City Scenic Highway policies by Riverside County and Cal Trans on those road segments which remain in their respective jurisdictions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Background

The Economic Development Element of the General Plan encompasses all other elements of the Plan. The health and vitality of the local economy is dependent upon the opportunities and constraints identified and addressed in the General Plan. The economic activity of the community is the result of a complex interrelationship of physical conditions in the Palo Verde Valley and City government and its activities and policies. As the City regulates development, it must establish a balance between the need to provide adequate levels of public services and facilities, and the need to assure the generation of adequate taxes and other revenues to support existing and future levels of development.

County, state and federal programs and policies have had a significant effect on local economic conditions. Federal fiscal policies have affected the U.S. farmer's ability to compete with other nations. State policies and programs can influence the long-term viability of prime agricultural lands and can enhance or deter their preservation. Other jurisdictions also influence the location of new highways and other important roads not located within the City. Essentially, the City occurs within a regional and national economy and must understand and stay atuned to regional and national economic trends.

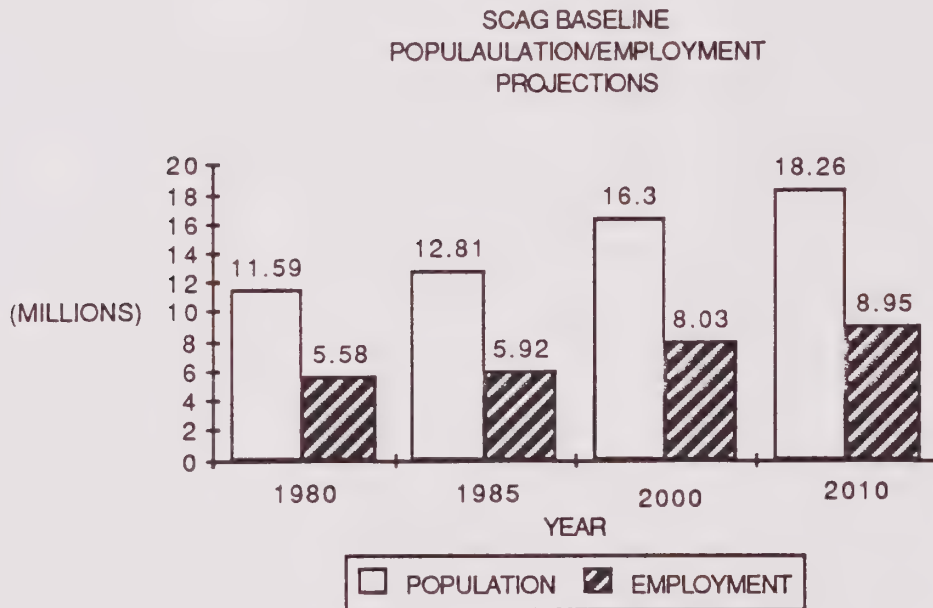
Southern California Regional Growth

The City of Blythe and the larger Palo Verde Valley region are directly impacted by the economic conditions of the Southern California region. The region, as defined by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) includes all of the Southern California Counties, excluding San Diego County. The SCAG region includes Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial Counties. More than 6% of the nation's population reside in the region. The Southern California region is the primary residence of over 74% of desert area tourists. If the region were a state it would rank second only to New York in personal income.

Since 1920, growth in the SCAG region has been rapid with a population increase of 171% between 1920 and 1940. World War II initiated explosive growth which increased regional population to more than 10 million by 1970. The pattern has continued with a 1985 population estimated at 12.8 million.

Total employment in the SCAG region has grown steadily with the increase in population. By 1972 the region had created approximately 4.27 million jobs. By 1984 the employment figures had risen to more than 5.9 million, an increase of more than 38% over the 12 year period. The 1984 regional housing figures indicate that the region had approximately 4.65 million housing units, an increase of almost 50,000 units from 1980 figures.

The Southern California Association of Government (SCAG) has recently completed baseline population, employment and housing projections for the region through the year 2010. Projections are based upon growth trends of the past 10 years and from input provided by sub-regional government associations, counties and municipalities. These projections also represent future state and national demographic and economic trends.



As shown in the above chart, if current demographic and economic trends continue, the Southern California (SCAG) region would increase to 18.3 million people by the year 2010, representing an increase of 5.5 million people or an increase of 43% over the 1985 population. This substantial rate of growth is equivalent to adding another state the population size of Indiana to the region.

This growth rate is approximately twice that expected on a national level. In 1980 one out of every 20 U.S. residents lived in the SCAG region. Based upon the SCAG Baseline Projections, by the year 2010 one out of every 15 U.S. residents will live in the SCAG region.

Riverside County Growth

Riverside County encompasses an area of approximately 7,310 square miles, stretching from the Colorado River, 200 miles west to the Los Angeles metropolitan area, and to within 10 miles of the Pacific Ocean. It is the fourth largest county in California being roughly the size of the State of Connecticut. The County is composed of nineteen incorporated cities, including Blythe. There are also many unincorporated communities in the county including Ripley, and the Mesa Verde areas in the vicinity of Blythe, as well as substantial amounts of state and federally controlled lands such as parks, wildlife areas, and other public lands.

Riverside County is a large, diverse and rapidly developing jurisdiction. Much of this growth in the past 15 years has been due to the County's location within the Southern California region. Expanding regional markets, employment and availability of land for development have put Riverside County squarely in the path of residential, commercial and industrial development over the next two decades. The historic growth has resulted in a diversification of the County's economic base, including a thriving tourist sector. Agriculture has, and continues to play an important role, being a major industry in Riverside County.

Current Demographic Character

Riverside County was the fastest growing county in Southern California during the period from 1970 to 1980. The County's population grew from 456,900 to 663,900, an increase of 45.3%, or an average compound rate of 3.8% annually. U.S. Census Bureau population estimates for January 1986 place the County's population at 838,474. Furthermore, Riverside County is projected to be the fastest growing county in California from 1985 to 1995, with a projected population increase of 37.1% . Average household income in the county is expected to grow at a strong rate of 68% over a ten year period, standing at \$20,259 in 1980, and projected at \$33,948 by 1990.

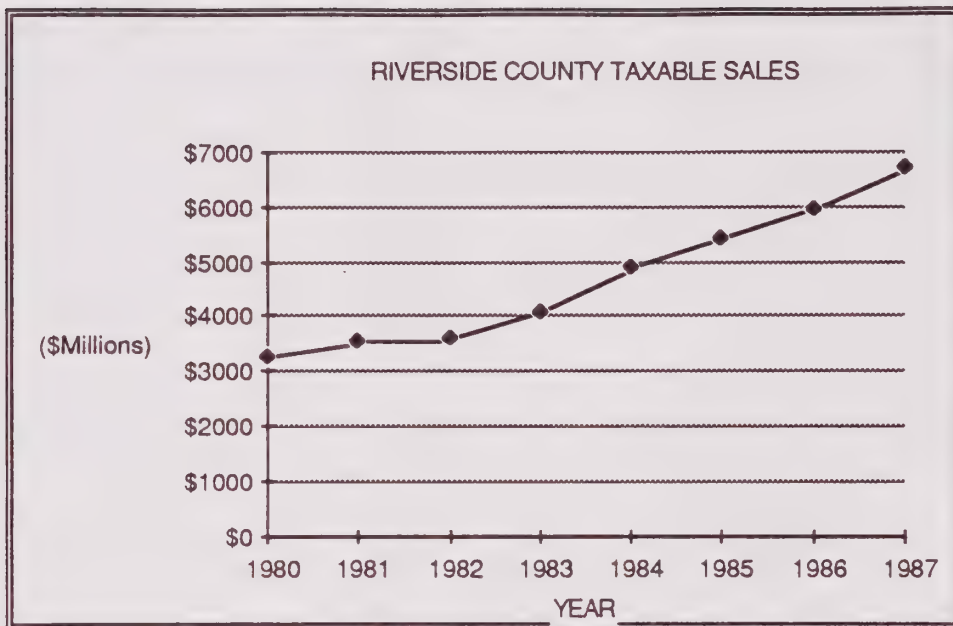
Construction Trends

Consistent with the rapid growth in population has been the rapid rate of building construction, contributed to in no small degree by development in the County Desert Region, particularly in the Coachella Valley. In 1984, residential construction in Riverside County increased by 61.6% over 1983 levels, providing more than \$1.2 billion in new residences. In 1985 County residential development had increased by 16,587 units with a total valuation of over \$1 billion. Residential development in 1986 provided an additional 20,936 units with a valuation of nearly \$1.4 billion.

From 1983 to 1984, the construction of new commercial and industrial facilities increased by 63.7%, with a 1984 valuation of \$235,011,000, for a total permitted building valuation of \$1.8 billion (including miscellaneous building permit valuation). Total building valuation for 1985 came to \$1.7 billion, a 4.8% decrease over the 1984 figures . This decline was due to a drop in residential construction -- total residential construction in 1985 coming to less than \$1.1 billion, down 19% from 1984 figures, as discussed above. Commercial and industrial permitted valuation were up for 1985, from \$235,011,000 in 1984 to \$383,221,000 in 1985.

Taxable Sales

Between 1982 and 1983 Riverside County taxable sales increased 12%, to just over \$4 billion. Taxable sales for 1984 exceeded '83 figures by approximately 19.5%, totalling about \$4.9 billion . The County's broadly based economy has provided general economic resilience, ranking it number one in the increased generation of taxable receipts for 1984 . Taxable sales for the County have continued to grow, reaching \$5.4 billion in 1985, and almost \$6 billion in 1986.



Projected Growth

Riverside County is projected to be the fastest growing county in California between 1985 and 1995, with a projected population increase of 37.1%. The most recent population projections for Riverside County have been developed by the Southern California Association of Governments, and projects a growth of 166.3%, from the 1984 population of 757,500 to a 2010 population of 2,017,200.

Riverside County had approximately 247,000 jobs in 1984, a share of 4% of all employment in the SCAG region. By 2010, the County is projected to add 230,000 jobs, about 8% of the expected regional increase, or about double the share captured by the County heretofore. By 2010, the Riverside County's employment is projected to be 477,000 jobs, or a 93% growth in the total number of jobs over the period.

Blythe Regional Growth

The City of Blythe and the surrounding Palo Verde Valley have experienced erratic growth, caused in part by the nationwide decline in agricultural markets and in their volatility, and the lingering impacts of the 1981-83 recession and record interest rates. The study area is located in Regional Statistical Area (RSA) 54, and with development primarily occurring adjacent to the California/Arizona border, on a major Interstate Highway (Interstate-10), the completion of which in the 1970s has provided an important stimulus for broadening economic growth in the region.

Population and Employment

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has estimated population growth in Regional Statistical Area (RSA) 54 at 3.7% for the period from 1970 to 1980. By contrast, the RSA's population has grown from 17,000 in 1980 to 19,200 in 1985, a 13% increase. Furthermore, SCAG estimates for population in the year 2010 stand at 27,429, a 53 % increase over 1980 figures.

Current Conditions

Blythe and surrounding areas depend heavily on tourism for both taxable sales and employment. The Colorado River, located on the eastern boundary of the Palo Verde Valley, approximately 1.5 miles from Blythe's city limits, attracts visitors from Arizona, the Coachella Valley and the Los Angeles Basin. The area surrounding Blythe is heavily agricultural, supporting a population of approximately 8,000 people, excluding the population of Blythe itself. The regional population is nearly 16,000 in RSA 54 (includes the community of Desert Center with approximately 140 people).

Community of East Blythe

The Community of East Blythe is generally described as that populated area occurring immediately east of the Blythe city limits, and extending to the Colorado River, being bound on the north by Chanslor Way (Riverside Drive) and on the south by 14th Avenue. The community suffers from extensive structural deterioration and dilapidation. Approximately 20% of the structures are classified as dilapidated, 42% require significant rehabilitation, and 39% require upkeep and maintenance.

Many of the commercial uses in East Blythe share their lots with residential structures, with a lack of planned distinction and buffer between residential and commercial development. More than a third of all residential uses occur in commercial areas. The present condition presents difficult planning, environmental, and health and safety problems for the community and the area. Approximately 28% of the lots in the community are of irregular size and shape, and/or are landlocked without access to public streets. Road improvements, including the repair of four bridges, are also required. Much of the area lacks street improvements and dedicated rights-of-way are either highly irregular or are non-existent. The community has no storm water collection system.

The median family income in the East Blythe Community is \$10,463 (1986) or approximately 66.6% of the median income for the County. This condition has limited the availability of local private financial resources to renovate and restore many of the commercial developments in East Blythe.

Projected Growth

The projected growth for the unincorporated areas of RSA 54, within the Blythe study area, indicates limited potential for significant growth. The region is characterized by broad expanses of vacant desert lands, with intensive agriculture occurring in the river valley utilizing diverted river water for irrigation. As corrections in local production costs and commodity prices occur, local agriculture will once again become more profitable. The lower value of the dollar should also help to make agricultural products more attractive abroad.

Future commercial and residential development in the East Blythe area is possible and significant upgrading and renovation may be realized if major redevelopment efforts and public funding can be implemented. The East Blythe community generally suffers from a lack of infrastructure. The lack of adequate domestic water service and limited access to

sewage treatment plant capacity further restrict development. The community is also quite removed from other development centers in the County and may not receive the level of attention or funding required to revitalize the area.

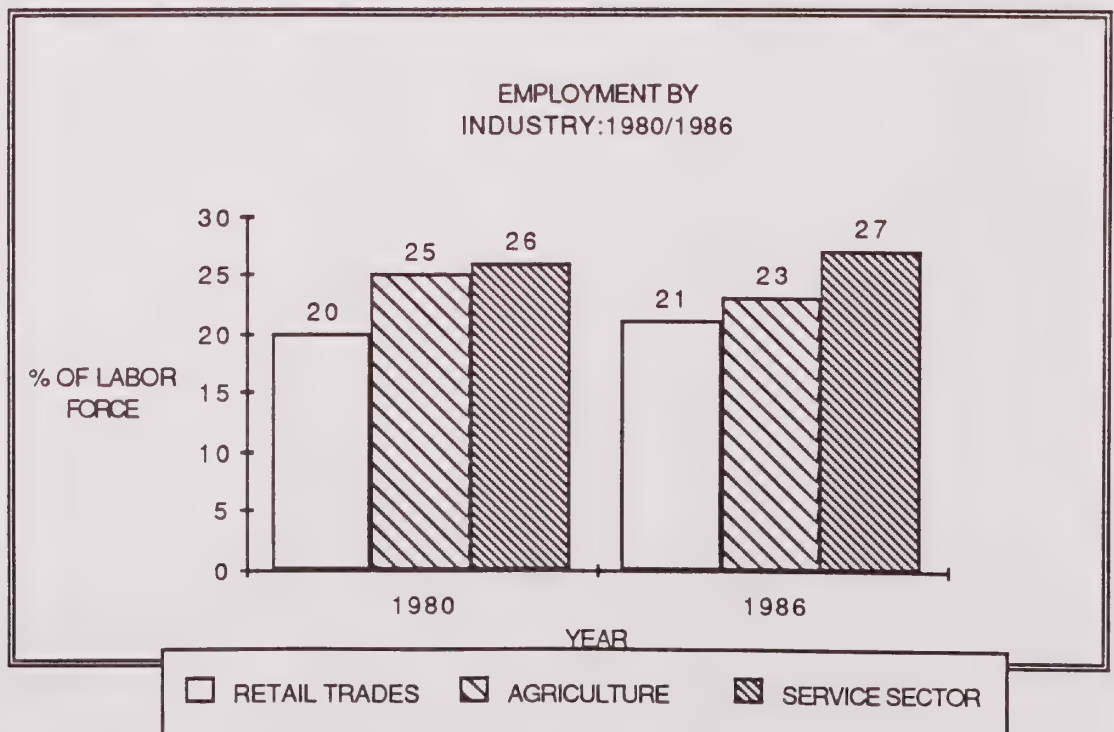
City of Blythe Growth

The population of the City of Blythe has fluctuated somewhat over the last 15 years, with a net population loss from 7,047 in 1970 to 6,805 in 1980. Population growth has returned to normal, however, with estimates for January 1988 population in Blythe at 8,065, a 18.5% increase over 1980 figures. Additional discussion of the City's growth trends are illustrated in the following sections.

Current Demographic Character And Projected Growth

Based on 1980 Census figures for the 92225 zip code area, the largest employer by industry was the service sector, with agriculture second and retail trades third; these market segments employed 1,284 (26%), 1,251 (25%) and 1,003 (20%) persons, respectively. Of a total population of 13,996, a total of 4,992 persons were employed, or 35.6% of the total population.

The employment figures had changed slightly by 1986, showing a gain in the service sector and retail trades, and a loss in agriculture (see chart below). Although agriculture has shown some improvement in early 1987 throughout the country, the depressed conditions encountered in the 80's are likely to have a lasting effect on employment both nationally and in the Palo Verde Valley area. The increases shown in the service sector are likely to continue, following the national trend towards a service economy.



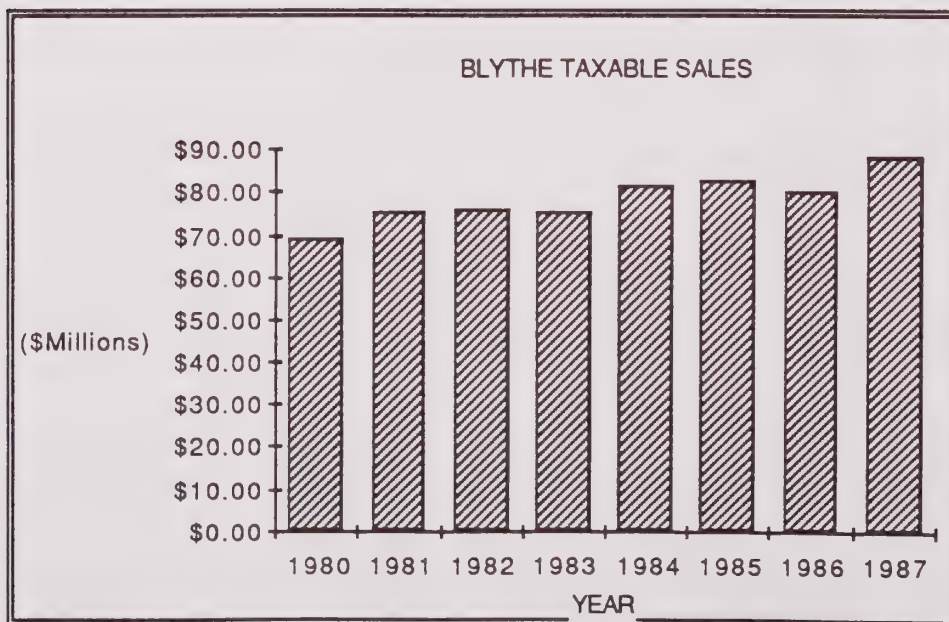
Income

According to the Bureau of the Census, the median age in the City in 1980 was 27, and the median household income was \$13,594.00. In comparison, the median age in Riverside County and the state of California in 1980 was 32 and 29, respectively, with a median household income of \$16,037.00 and \$21,083.00, respectively.

Median household income in the City of Blythe is estimated to have risen to \$17,485.00 by 1986, and should rise to \$22,429.00 by 1991. The construction of the State Prison in Blythe will undoubtedly raise the City's median household income, since that figure for prison employee households in California is approximately \$23,600. Since presumably an entirely employed population is relocating to the area, this figure will not be lessened by the potential for unemployment. The 1980 Census shows that of a total of 4,228 households in zip code area 92225 (encompassing the City of Blythe and surrounding areas), 1,118 or 26.4% received social security income, and 635 or 15% received public assistance.

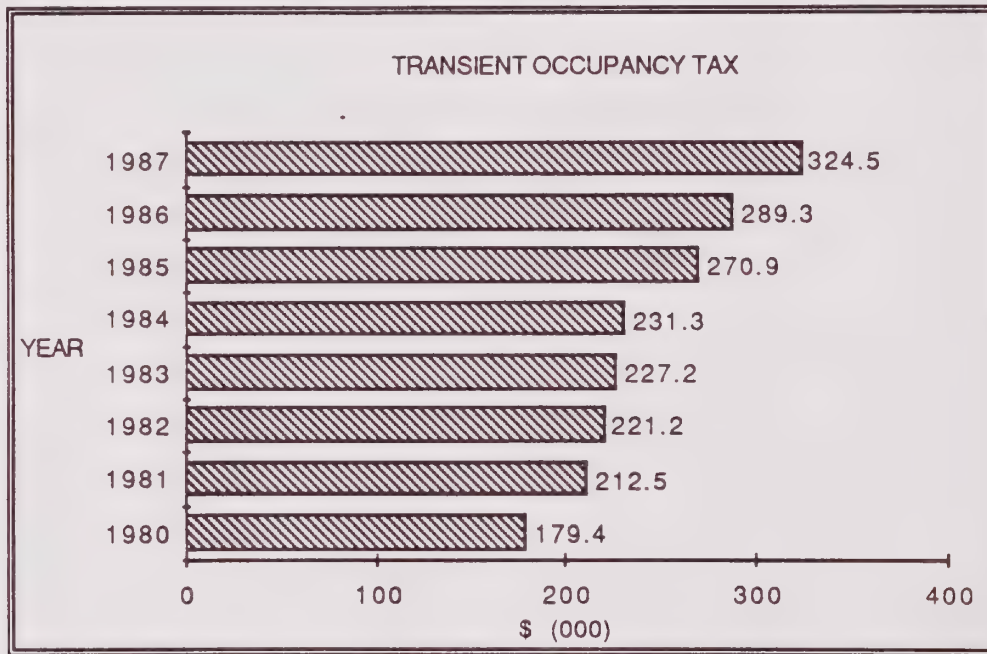
Taxable Sales

Taxable sales in the city of Blythe have shown strong growth. As indicated in the chart below, taxable sales increased 19.6% from 1980 to 1985. The Blythe area was only slightly affected by the 1982-83 recession, with taxable sales decreasing only slightly in 1983. The area has recovered well from that recession, showing generally steady increases every year. Unincorporated lands around Blythe city limits provide an important source of taxable sales income for the city, since Blythe is the only commercial center in the area. Surrounding communities generally have limited services, and the small Valley-wide population limits the feasibility of local businesses in areas other than Blythe.



Tourism and Traveler Revenues

The continued growth of the area as a major traveler commercial and tourist market is evidenced by the strong growth of the transient occupancy tax collected in the city. In 1980, the City collected \$179,467 in transient occupancy tax. This figure had risen to \$227,216 in 1983, and to \$289,354 in 1986, a 61% increase over a six year period, as shown below. Transient occupancy tax collected for 1987 totalled \$324.5 million, showing a 12% increase over the same period in 1986.

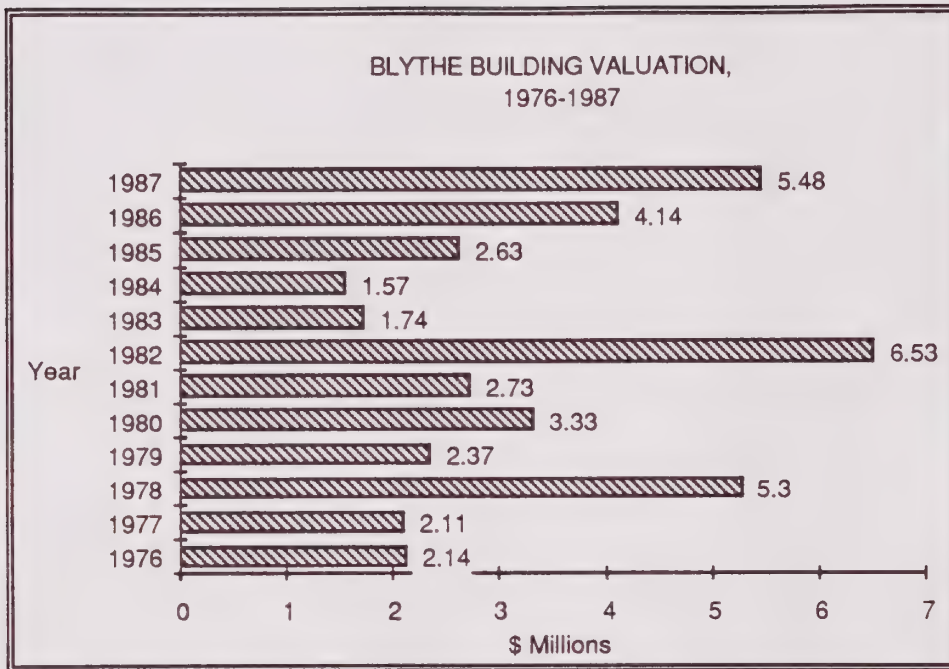


The City had 528 hotel/motel rooms in 1986. Of these, 113 were in guest houses or facilities too small or not located with visibility for tourist business. Based on the transient occupancy tax collected, estimates can be made as to average occupancy at approximately 68%. There are a total of 151,475 room-nights available in the City's hotels, with no allowance for repair and maintenance.

The construction of the new state prison will add at least 14,326 room-nights to Blythe's hotel economy (at 120 percent prison occupancy), and additional revenue of \$45,800 in transient occupancy tax to the City annually. The City's transient occupancy tax has risen at an average of 8.5% annually.

Construction Trends

Construction trends in the City of Blythe in the past 10 years have constituted a sideways or holding pattern, with no clear advance or decline other than that induced by the national economic recession in the early 1980's. The decline in new permitted valuation during the 1983 - 1985 period may have been induced by a decline in the farm economy and sustained relatively high interest rates. In any event, the City of Blythe appears to have fared no worse than much of the country during the last decade. The meaning of the 10 years of data shown in the chart below should not be viewed as a particularly meaningful indicator for the next decade's growth in Blythe.



New State Prison

The California State Department of Corrections Chuckawalla State Prison in the unincorporated areas west of the City of Blythe, will greatly affect employment and the general economy of the area. The California Employment Development Department estimated a permanent Blythe (City) labor force of 2,732 persons in 1980. A study performed by the Department of Corrections has determined that a total of 650 people are required to staff the prison at 120 percent of capacity. At 190 percent of capacity, 987 employees are required.

The Department of Corrections estimates that 250 of those employed by the prison will have originated from Blythe and surrounding areas. The balance have been relocated from other facilities, bringing their families with them. The Department estimates that approximately 1,310 people will have relocated to the Blythe area in the course of the prison's opening (1,890 people at 190 percent of capacity). If the Blythe average household size 3.012 persons per household is applied, the projected additional population from 190% capacity operation of the prison will be approximately 2,211 persons. This potentially large influx will generate increased demand for goods and services, as well as public services and facilities.

The service sector of the Blythe economy should also grow considerably due to the new state prison facility. The increase in population will require increased public facilities and services (water, sewer, telephone, police and fire protection) and more retail establishments. Although it is not likely that the current commercial enterprises in Blythe are at capacity, the prison worker population will increase taxable sales by approximately \$44,000-55,000 per employee annually, based on a study prepared for the Department of Corrections.

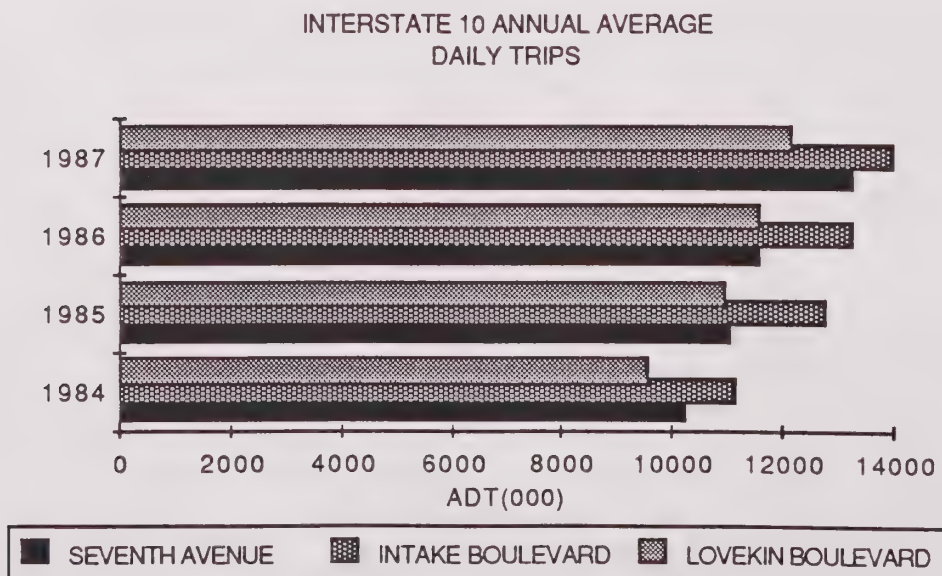
However, the application of the Prison Study multiplier effect is unclear and should not be relied upon solely. Based upon an unweighted analysis, at 120% capacity, prison and induced employment results in an additional approximately \$128,917 in sales tax revenue. At 190% capacity, prison and induced employment increases Blythe sales tax revenues by \$161,544 annually. These estimates assume per capita taxable expenditures, and that the City of Blythe will capture 75% of taxable sales generated by prison and induced employment.

Prison employment also causes the creation of "induced" jobs, those created indirectly by the influx of employees and prisoners in the area. It is estimated that 528 induced jobs will have been created in Riverside County as a result of the prison, of which 374 will be in Blythe. The greatest number of prison-induced jobs, 199, will have been created in retail trades. Restaurant employment stimulated by prison development is expected to have increased by an additional 51 jobs.

Interstate 10

The City's location on a major Interstate Freeway has already had a major influence on some retail trades, particularly motels, fast food restaurants and gasoline service stations. Several fast food restaurants have recently been built or approved in the City. These facilities are owned by franchise operators, whose livelihood depends on growth in the City and I-10 traffic. Several motel chains have also been studying the feasibility of building new facilities in the City. Many of the existing businesses have renovated their facades and improved their signage to attract customers and to make a competitive impression on the I-10 traveler.

These Caltrans figures show an 18% to 20% increase in traffic on the Interstate in two years, considerably higher than the statewide average of 3.6%. Traffic on Interstate 10 has increased substantially from 1984 to 1986 at points in the Blythe area, as shown below:



Travelers on Interstate 10 generally use Blythe as a convenience stop, since it is the only substantial area of urban development for approximately 200 miles to the east (Phoenix, Arizona area), and 120 miles to the west (Indio/Palm Springs area).

The Interstate is also the easiest access to Colorado River recreation areas located immediately east, northeast and southeast of the City, and the town of Laughlin, Nevada to the northeast. Although limited commercial services are available at these recreation areas, the City of Blythe and surrounding communities are the closest large commercial service and supply centers for campers and tourists in this portion of the Colorado River recreation area.

RV Parks/River Recreation Areas

Recreational vehicle park development in the Blythe area is largely limited to the Colorado River area. Several of these developments are owned and operated by the Riverside County Parks Department. Some of the RV park facilities are also operated by private concessionaires who then pass along a percentage of gross revenues to the County. County parks operated in the area include Mayflower Park, McIntyre park and the Blythe Marina. The seasons for these facilities typically run from Summer Season (April through September) to High season (October through March).

The Colorado River recreation area shows significant potential for expansion. The river area supports both County and privately owned RV parks and recreation facilities. At least two residential subdivisions have been approved by Riverside County for development along the river. In addition to boating, jet-skis, tube floats, and the Blythe boat cruise sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the river also attracts fishing and water fowl hunting. The river also creates a special environment which contrasts with the surrounding arid desert, providing a unique recreational setting. While on-river overnight RV facilities provide housing for tourists, motels and hotels in the City benefit from overflow visitors who stay in town in the evening and utilize day-facilities at the various parks.

The high season "snow birds" who typically stay at the river during the entire season are frequent users of the Blythe Municipal Golf Course, and a greater number of users could be generated by proper promotion. Promotion of river oriented RV parks by the is essentially conducted by the concessionaires, who utilize mailing lists, as well as radio and billboard advertising in the Los Angeles basin. The river and other recreation areas are also promoted by the Blythe Economic Development Commission and the Chamber of Commerce.

Future Economic Development

As the first step in identifying the appropriate goals, objectives and actions for the City of Blythe which will stimulate and enhance economic development, an analysis and evaluation of existing and anticipated economic conditions in Blythe, the Palo Verde Valley, and the Region was conducted (Blythe Economic Profile). A preliminary assessment of the potential regional growth opportunities on which the City could capitalize was also conducted. The recommended goals and objectives may form the basis for the development of an economic development strategy which should be presented as an integral part of the City's General Plan, and should address current, near-term and long-term economic conditions. They should also reflect the goals and aspirations of the community.

The City of Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley have historically constituted an essentially agri-business based economy, which has begun to diversify with the completion of U.S. Interstate-10. The passage of this major highway through the City has opened up the Colorado River recreation area to a population base of more than 10 million people within a four hour drive. It has also created a highway travelers market which is presently secured by the lack of urban development east and west of the Blythe area. There is recent evidence of the willingness of major manufacturers to locate in the region, with the proper level of incentives.

Now, new economic development pressures have arisen which constitute a prime opportunity for the City and region to revitalize and realize substantial economic growth. The development of a State Correctional Facility so close to the community has provided the City with the added potential necessary to revitalize, expand and broaden the local economy, while preserving the rural character of the area. The continued importance and viability of the regional transportation system, including I-10 and the Santa Fe Railroad, may play a critical role in the broadening of the local industrial base.

It is assumed that the City wishes to maximize its economic development potential, while establishing a balanced and secure economic future, which also preserves the best qualities of rural community living with a broadly based and enduring economy. The economic troubles suffered by the agricultural industry, and the impact they have had on the City's economy, have clearly demonstrated that a more diversified economy is necessary to avoid the potentially catastrophic impacts of another farm sector-specific recession. To help diversify the local economy, the city must examine a broad range of industrial development scenarios, which look at agri-business, warehousing/distribution, manufacturing or other types of development that optimize existing urban, facilities, services and transportation infrastructure.

The City of Blythe is the only community in the Palo Verde Valley region with the potential to address the increased economic and community development pressure being brought to bear on the community. The lack of action to secure the community's economic future may not only result in the deferring of development, but may also allow the pent up demand to stimulate urban development elsewhere, in the area. By improving City infrastructure, encouraging the logical and coherent annexation of unincorporated lands, and the coordinating promotion of the City as a diversified urban economy, the groundwork may be laid for making the local economy less susceptible to economic downturns, and assuring a successful and prosperous future.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. Provide a broadly based economy in the City which provides a full range of employment and housing opportunities as well as recreation and commercial services and facilities.

2. Promote a healthy and balanced economy, which assures the maintenance of a tax base adequate to support present and future local and regional public services and facilities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

1. Maintain the important role of agriculture and agri-business to the local economy and assure the orderly and logical extension of urbanization into agricultural areas.
2. As a means of enhancing and maintaining the City's financial soundness, broaden the City's tax base by actively soliciting revenue and employment generating development compatible and consistent with the City's General Plan.
3. Enhance the tourist/traveler commercial potential of the Interstate-10 corridor by establishing development standards and controls which result in functionally planned and attractive service facilities which leave a lasting positive impression on visitors to the City.
4. Enhance the Hobsonway business district through vigorous implementation of the Blythe Redevelopment Plan and the establishment of municipal parking facilities.
5. The City shall actively pursue and, if appropriate, participate in the development of industrial park facilities which take advantage of existing major transportation facilities including Interstate-10 and Santa Fe rail lines.
6. Promote unique or special events/uses which will enhance the area's image as a tourist resort and recreation area, including appropriately located RV parks, a rodeo, camping, river races, fishing and hunting, desert camping and hiking, auto races, the County Fair and similar events and uses.
7. Reinforce Blythe's place as a regional administrative center through the cooperative planning of city and county administrative facilities within the city limits.

CHAPTER IV: ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Introduction

This chapter of the General Plan discusses the environmental resources of the City, its Sphere-of-Influence and the General Plan Study Area. The elements addressed in this chapter include Biological Resources, Archaeological and Cultural Resources, Water Resources, Air Quality, Mineral Resources, Energy Resources, and Open Space and Conservation. The City of Blythe has substantial environmental resources which contribute to the quality of life for City residents and which increasingly attract tourists and seasonal residents to the area. This chapter discusses their importance and the need for conservation.

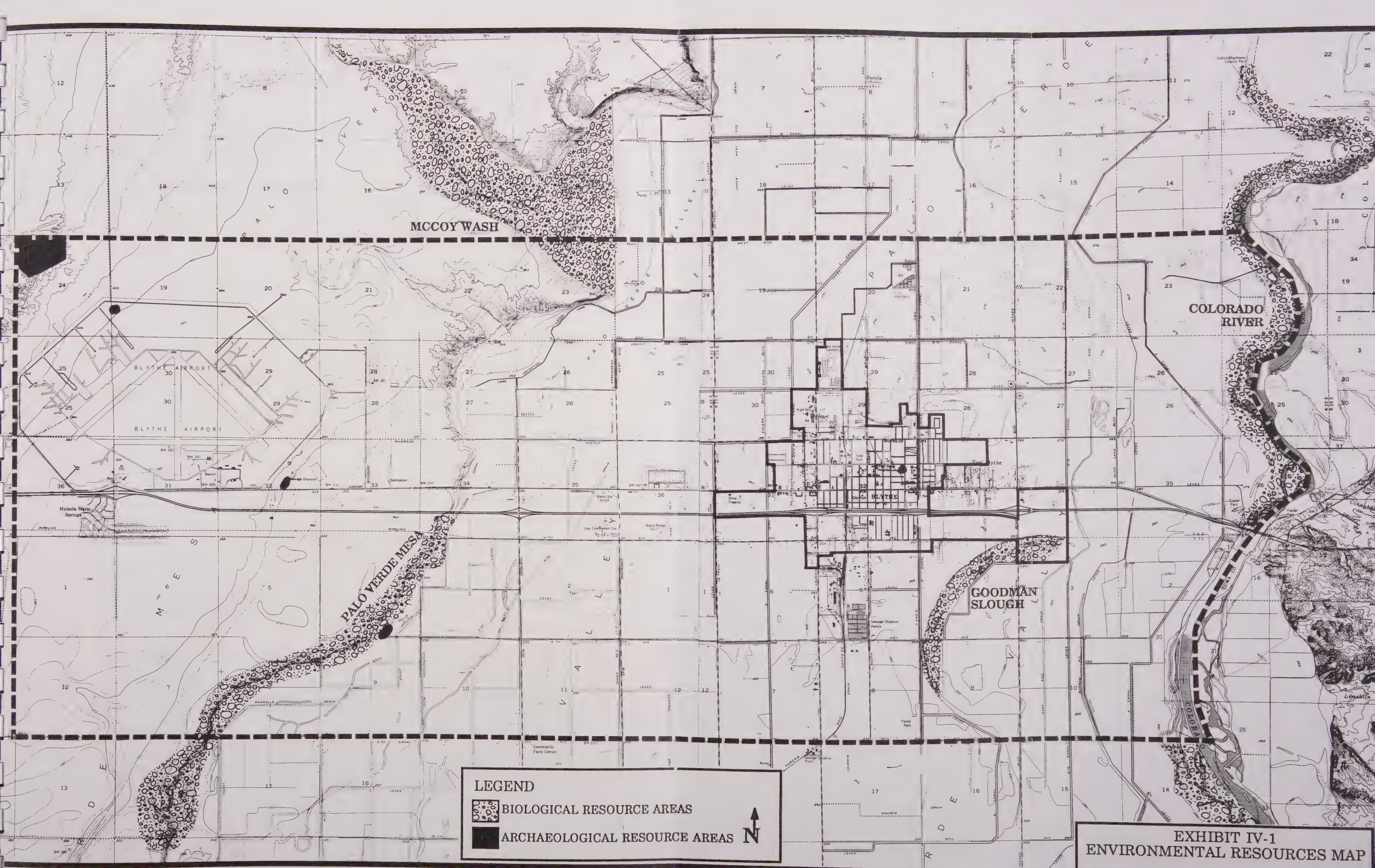
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Background


The Palo Verde Valley area provides a dramatic mix of arid desert and water oriented (riparian) habitat areas, which support a broad range of native and introduced year-round and migrant species of plants and animals. The sizable areas in active cultivation also provide important foraging habitat for numerous birds and small mammals. Important habitat areas include the Colorado River, agriculture related canals and drains, desert wash and flat-land areas, and the Palo Verde Mesa areas. These diverse and occasionally highly specialized communities constitute an important and valuable resource, which will require protection if their long-term value is to be preserved.


Principal Biological Communities

The biological resource areas of the Blythe Region of the Palo Verde Valley are dominated by three plant community types: creosote bush scrub community associated with undeveloped desert areas; riparian plant communities associated with the shoreline of the Colorado River and the canals and drains; and agricultural areas in active cultivation. Only the creosote bush scrub and riparian plant communities constitute true native habitat.



LEGEND

 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE AREAS

 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE AREAS




EXHIBIT IV-1
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES MAP

Creosote Scrub Community

The creosote scrub plant community is found throughout the North American deserts. In the Palo Verde Valley area of the Colorado Desert, dominant species include the creosote bush, burrobush, and a large number of annual wildflowers. Annual wildflowers can constitute up to 90% of the flora in this plant community. The major region of this plant community in the Blythe area is found in the vicinity of the Palo Verde Mesa, south of Interstate-10. Remnant parcels of creosote bush scrub are also found near the airport north of I-10, but most of these areas are degraded by surface disturbance. McCoy Wash has well-developed creosote bush scrub with a number of desert wash species. This drainage area is a very good and representative example of desert vegetation in the Blythe area.

Wetland Plant Communities

Wetland or riparian plant communities in the Blythe General Plan study area consist of bands of riparian vegetation along the banks of the Colorado River, and a limited but important growth of riparian vegetation along the agricultural canals and drains. The majority of the riverbank vegetation is tamarisk, an introduced species, and arrow-weed, a native shrub. Willows and cottonwoods, native and once plentiful, are now scarce in all areas except the Goose Flats area, where a remnant cottonwood forest community is still present. The many unlined canals and drains throughout the study area support a riparian scrub of saltbush, quailbush, and arrow-weed, with cattails occurring in a few locations. These strips of wetland vegetation provide good habitat for many wildlife species.

Wildlife Habitat and Fauna

Desert Areas

Desert portions of the Blythe study area are dominated by habitat typical of that found in the creosote bush scrub communities of the Colorado Deserts. The abundance and diversity of wildlife within the study area have been reduced by the establishment of agriculture, rural residential and urban development. However, sufficient open space exists for a variety of common reptiles, birds, and mammals to continue to exist. Coyote are probably still relatively abundant, while less common and more secretive animals, including the badger, ringtail, and bobcat, may avoid the area or have been reduced in numbers. Rattlesnakes, lizards, and a number of desert birds, such as the common roadrunner and Gambel's quail, are common in the desert habitats of the study area.

Farm Lands

While the farmlands in the study area are obviously not native habitat, they are important to many animals that have adapted and flourished since the conversion of desert lands to agriculture. Birds are the most predominant, especially insect eaters. These areas support egrets, and herons, blackbirds, ducks, and other water birds, which take advantage of the varied food resources that change with the crop cycle. Large areas of cultivated lands provide major foraging areas of irrigated open lands for birds, the value of which would not be comparable if these areas were composed of fragmented smaller agriculture areas. Cultivated lands near the Colorado River are very important to migratory birds in the spring and fall.

Wetland Habitat

As discussed above, wetland habitat in the study area occurs on the banks of the Colorado River, and the lining of many of the agricultural canals and drains. The denser riparian vegetation provides cover for many birds and mammals, and the taller trees are valuable nest sites and perches for birds. Of particular interest is the Goodman Slough, which supports a remnant riparian shrub community which includes high value bird habitat. Due to the dominance of non-native tamarisk trees in the riparian habitat, much of the river shoreline habitat is of poor quality. These affected areas, however, have good potential for restoration, expansion and enhancement with plantings of native riparian species.

Important Biological Resource Areas

Wetland Habitats

The Colorado River shoreline extending from Mayflower County Park south to Interstate-10 has limited productive riparian habitat, but has a substantial potential for enhancement. The undesirable tamarisk plants have become well established and have replaced the native willows and cottonwoods. Good existing stands of arrow-weed and saltbush still provide important habitat for the Crissal thrasher. The Arizona cotton rat may be present within this region. The river is also heavily used as a route for migratory birds and farmlands in this area provide important open space buffers near the river's edge. Both state and federal agencies may have some jurisdiction over proposed development near the river's edge.

Goodman Slough, although not a true wetlands, this old river meander has high potential to be enhanced and to become important habitat for local wildlife. While portions of the slough are currently degraded by dumping and inappropriate land uses, an extensive growth of saltbush and arrow-weed appears to provide suitable habitat for the sensitive Crissal thrasher. The slough also appears to provide potential habitat for the Arizona cotton rat, which could be greatly enhanced.

The Goose Flat Park area of the Colorado River constitutes the best wetlands habitat in or near the General Plan study area. This remnant riparian woodland dominated by cottonwoods and willows is managed for habitat value by state and federal agencies. This area has high potential for harboring the sensitive Arizona cotton rat.

Desert Habitats

McCoy Wash is a major drainage bisecting the Palo Verde Mesa northwest of the City and contains a relatively good example of the desert wash plant community and habitat. Desert wash habitats are many times more valuable to wildlife than the adjacent open desert, especially to native birds. The wash has high potential for occurrences of LaConte's thrasher, Crissal thrasher, prairie falcon, Colorado Valley wood rat, and desert kit fox.

The slopes of the Palo Verde Mesa area generally extending from Interstate-10 south to 20th Avenue is very sandy, almost dune-like, creating habitat for plants and animals distinct from the creosote bush scrub so common in the surrounding desert areas. This area supports a substantial growth of mesquite at the mesa's edge, providing valuable habitat for

wildlife. Upland game, including quail and doves, are especially common here. The desert areas immediately west are good habitat for many native plant and animal species, including the desert kit fox and the Crissal thrasher, and the lack of disturbance in this area increases the value of the Mesa edge. A large parcel of undeveloped desert adjacent to the Mesa is managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management.

Sensitive Species

The literature reviewed in the course of preparing the Biological Resources Element of the General Plan includes the California Natural Diversity Data Base. This resource retains updated computerized records of sensitive species from all areas of the State, and records and publications of the Bureau of Land Management. The literature search indicates that there are seven (7) sensitive animal species. An additional three (3) animal species, LaConte's thrasher, prairie falcon, and the desert kit fox have also been identified as sensitive. These sensitive and important species are discussed below. No plant species of concern were identified either in the literature search or from field surveys. Sensitive species are so called because of their limited distribution, restrictive habitat requirements, particular susceptibility to human disturbance, or a combination of these factors. The following sensitive species are known or believed to occur within the study area.

Humpback Sucker

The Humpback sucker is a native Colorado River fish that can reach three feet in length and up to 16 pounds in weight. Formerly a migratory species which bred in the upper tributaries of the Colorado River, this fish has declined tremendously since the construction of major dams on the river. Juveniles are rarely found, although adults are occasionally caught. All areas of the Colorado River occurring in the General Plan study area are potential habitat for this fish. This fish is fully protected under the State Fish and Game Code and is listed as "Endangered" by the State. It is listed as a Category 2 candidate species by the Federal Government, currently lacking adequate information for listing.

Sharp-shinned Hawk

The Sharp-shinned hawk is not known to nest in the study area but is believed to migrate and possibly winter near the Colorado River. The Blythe area is not known to be an important habitat for this species on the whole. This bird is listed as a Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Game.

Prairie Falcon

The Prairie falcon has an extensive range and inhabits arid, open lands and occasionally woodlands. It nests on high cliff faces and is a year-round resident in much of its range. The Prairie falcon feeds primarily on small birds but also on small mammals and reptiles. It can be expected to occur in all the desert areas surrounding Blythe and one was observed during a recent field survey by the consulting biology team. Agricultural areas adjacent to open desert are very favorable foraging habitat, where quail and dove, its primary prey flourish. The Palo Verde Mesa in the southwest portion of the study area is a good example of enhanced edge habitat between farmlands and the desert. Primary threats are from pesticide contamination, robbing of eyries by falconers, shooting, human activity near nesting sites, and habitat conversion by development activities. The Prairie falcon is fully protected by California Fish and Game Codes and is designated as a Species of Special Concern.

Crissal Thrasher

The Crissal thrasher is a common resident along the length of the Colorado River, occupying dense brush in and adjacent to desert riparian vegetation, such as cottonwood or mesquite, and well-vegetated desert washes. This bird may also nest in the McCoy Wash, the southern portion of the Palo Verde Mesa and the Goodman Slough. The larger canals and drains with dense brush also probably provide limited habitat for the Crissal thrasher. It is identified as a wide-spread and declining species or peripheral and threatened subspecies in California only.

LaConte's Thrasher

The LaConte's thrasher inhabits areas with sparse desert scrub, especially those which contain small washes and cholla cactus, in which it builds its nest. This species occurs in quite low population densities, less than five birds per square mile. Excellent habitat occurs in some portions of the study area, notably McCoy Wash, and the undeveloped desert on the Palo Verde Mesa, where an abundance of silver cholla within open creosote bush scrub provides suitable nesting locations. It is identified as a wide-spread and declining species or peripheral and threatened subspecies in California only.

Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo

The Western yellow-billed cuckoo is a very rare summer visitor to Southern California riparian woodlands, preferring dense willow thickets and cottonwood forest. Populations have steadily declined since the mid-1970s and very little of its original riparian woodland habitat along the river now exists. The Goose Flat region has the best potential for nesting habitat restoration in the study area. This bird is a candidate species for federal listing as a threatened species, and is listed as "Threatened" by the California Department of Fish and Game.

Least Bell's Vireo

Least Bell's vireo is a small, migratory insect eater which occurs in willow-dominated riparian habitat. Formerly common and widespread through central and southern California, it is now restricted in range to a few Southern California locations. The General Plan consulting biologist feels that the birds recorded appearance in the Blythe area is in error and that the Arizona race may occur along the Colorado River. The Least Bell's vireo is listed as "Endangered" by both the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Desert Kit Fox

The desert kit fox is a small, primarily nocturnal fox which occurs throughout the deserts of North America in a variety of habitats including creosote bush scrub. Chiefly a carnivore, it plays an important role in rodent control. Evidence of the species was noted near the Palo Verde Mesa and the outer boundaries of the Blythe study area. Principal threats to this species are from loss of habitat, vehicle kills, and indiscriminate predator control programs. The desert kit fox is fully protected under the California Fish and Game Code.

Arizona Cotton Rat

The Arizona cotton rat occurs in marshy areas along the Colorado River. Two localities along the river have been identified and provide a fair amount of suitable habitat for this rodent. The California Department of Fish and Game has placed it on the highest priority list for research and protection, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has also placed this rodent on its candidate list for those species with potential for future listing as endangered or threatened.

Colorado Valley Wood Rat

The Colorado Valley wood rat is found in the low desert areas of Imperial, San Diego and Riverside Counties, building its nests in cacti or under mesquite. Much of the desert areas in and around the study area probably support the wood rat, which is identified as a Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Game.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES GOALS

1. To preserve and protect the City and regional biological resources, especially those of sensitive, rare, threatened or endangered species of wildlife and their habitat, and to encourage a balance between nature and human development.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES POLICIES

1. The City shall coordinate and cooperate with State and Federal agencies to preserve and enhance the recreational opportunities for fishermen and conserve habitat in the Colorado River.
2. The City shall require or insist that responsible County, State and Federal agencies assure the provision of ample natural and enhanced open-space setbacks from the Colorado River's edge in conjunction with any development near or adjacent to the river's edge.
3. Land use planning for agricultural lands shall be so designated so as to assure the maintenance of large blocks of cultivated lands, avoiding fragmented agricultural zones and thereby assuring a more productive and contiguous foraging habitat for water birds and other wildlife.
4. The Palo Verde Mesa habitat area extending from Interstate-10 to 20th Avenue and desert lands immediately west shall be designated as Open Space on the General Plan land use map to assure their protection as valuable and important wildlife habitat.
5. That the Goodman Slough be designated as a "Biological Reserve" in the Open Space Element of the General Plan and that an overall plan of enhancement, restoration and utilization be developed to assure its long-term preservation.
6. That the City encourage State and Federal action to enhance the Goose Flat habitat area through re-vegetation with native riparian woodland trees and the elimination of tamarisk plants here and elsewhere in the riparian habitat areas.

7. The City shall coordinate and cooperate with County, State and Federal agencies in the preservation of the McCoy Wash habitat area through the provision of large minimum lot sizes and substantial development setbacks.
8. The City shall encourage and/or, where appropriate, require the use of native trees and vegetation, including palo verde, mesquite, cottonwood, ocotillo, and screwbean, in public areas, private common areas, street dividers and other landscape areas where Planning Department control can be exercised.

CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Background

The City of Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley region occur in an area which probably harbored significant prehistoric aboriginal habitations, but is an area where most of the evidence for prehistoric cultures have disappeared. The Blythe General Plan study area is largely located within the Colorado River flood plain. The region is an extremely dry environment characterized by high summer temperatures, mild winters, and chronically deficient rainfall.

Blythe receives only about 4 inches of rain each year, most of which occurs either in the winter months as a result of attenuated Pacific storms reaching the desert or in late summer as the result of high intensity thunder storms moving landward from the Gulf of California.

Prehistoric Culture

The aboriginal (earliest) inhabitants of the Colorado River in the vicinity of the General Plan study area were largely Yuman-speakers. In historic times, the Mohave, Quechan, and Halchidhoma all probably lived in the area at various times. The region was home to the Halchidhoma until about 1826 when the combined attack of the Quechan and Mohave resulted in more than 250 casualties to the resident tribe.

The survivors fled to the Gila River where they joined the Maricopa tribe and lost their tribal identity. Their vacated territory was soon filled by a division of the desert-dwelling, Shoshonean-speaking, Chemehuevi, an offshoot of the Southern Paiute.

Subsistence along the river relied mainly on intensive collecting of wild plant foods and flood water farming, supplemented by hunting and fishing. Mesquite was unquestionably the most important of the wild plants, but various cacti in the nearby uplands were also important. The probably casual flood plain farming included such crops as corn, beans, squashes, and, in historic times, wheat, barley, and melons.

Remarkable ceramics were made that included a variety of painted and plain vessel forms. They hunted with bow and arrow, and fished with poison spears, nets, and weirs. Villages were located on the river bank, and houses were usually flat-topped ramada-like design. Boats were made from balsas while rafts were made from bundled bullrushes and reeds. The river was capable of supporting large populations of aboriginal inhabitants. In 1605 Don Juan de Onate reported more than 16,000 Indians on the lower river between Las Vegas and tidewater.

Unfavorable floods meant fewer crops, and at such times full-time hunting, fishing, and gathering was required to sustain the tribe. At these times, tribes required more living space, and this led to competition for resources, thefts of food, petty conflicts, and sometimes outright war. The warfare pattern was chronic, brutal, and always involved neighboring groups.

Less is known about the prehistoric cultural resources of the lower Colorado River than any other area in California. There has not been a single archaeological site excavated and reported in the literature within 100 km of the study area. It is believed that ceramic technology dates back to perhaps 800 A.D., but this is merely a guess. The antiquity of agriculture is also unknown.

Historic Culture

It is believed that the first party of european visitors to enter the Palo Verde Valley were the Garces Party in 1776, traveling up the Colorado River looking for a better interior route from Yuma, Arizona to Monterey, California. Serious settlement of the region was initiated by Thomas Blythe, a San Francisco capitalist, after whom the City of Blythe is named. In 1875, Blythe, together with other investors, filed claims on 40,000 acres of land in the Palo Verde Valley with the intention of building a ditch to irrigate the valley with Colorado River water to permit large-scale agriculture. At that time, the "city" of Blythe consisted of one or more tule huts, a store surrounded by mesquite wood-and-rawhide-corral, and a few acres of cleared land. Blythe died before the water conveyance system was complete, however, his dream was carried through and in 1877 water was supplied to the valley for irrigation.

The establishment of the Palo Verde Land and Water Company in 1904 allowed the purchase of the Blythe Ranch holdings and set in motion a program of rapidly expanding agricultural development. The Palo Verde Mutual Water District was organized in 1908, and the existing improvements of the Palo Verde Land and Water Company were exchanged for 60% of the stock in the mutual company.

In the years that followed, irrigation facilities were expanded and flood control dikes were constructed. The establishment of the Palo Verde Joint Levee District in 1918 and the Palo Verde Drainage District in 1921 furthered the protection of newly established farmlands and provided for much needed drainage facilities, respectively. The final major period of agricultural expansion began in 1923 with the creation of the Palo Verde Irrigation District and the combining of levee and drainage districts under one entity.

Summary of Current Knowledge

A records review of the California Archaeological Inventory was conducted by staff at the Archaeological Research Unit at the University of California-Riverside. Four recorded archaeological sites were identified within the General Plan study area. Three of these sites can be characterized as "activity sites", consisting of pottery scatters, lithic (rock) waste flakes, a trail segment, and a small cleared circular area.

The fourth site consists of several boulders with petroglyphs and was located in a rock wall at the Monterey Court Motel. The motel has been replaced by another more modern motel and the disposition of the glyph-bearing boulders is unknown. Predicting the location where future sites may be discovered is difficult. However, given the regional topography and the physical and environmental resources of the area, undisturbed areas of the mesa and desert offer the most promising sites for future archaeological resource finds.

An inventory of historic resources was conducted in the General Plan study area by the County of Riverside in the early 1980s. This inventory of intact structures identified 44 individual buildings. None of these structures occur on any County, State or Federal list of significant or important historical structures.

Since methodology on how the survey was conducted is not available, the value and importance of these structures is still unclear. Development proposals which may affect identified potentially significant historical resources should be required to have a cultural resource survey performed to assure the protection of important historic resources.

CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL

1. To protect and preserve important and unique City and regional archaeological and historical resources, thereby assuring the maintenance and continuity of the Palo Verde Valley's cultural heritage and to enrich the cultural heritage of the City's residents.

CULTURAL RESOURCES POLICIES

1. The City shall develop and maintain a comprehensive cultural resource data base utilizing resources of the Eastern Information Center, General Land Office Survey plats and original resources to be developed in the future.
2. Development proposals will be reviewed and evaluated to determine potential impacts to identified and suspected cultural resources of potential importance or significance, in order to determine appropriate mitigation measures where necessary.
3. The City shall, in cooperation with the Palo Verde Valley Historical Society, develop a landmark designation process for integration in the Cultural Resources Element to promote the preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures.

4. To prevent vandalism and other threats, the City Planning Department shall treat archaeological resource information as confidential and shall not permit its publication.
5. Recognizing the potential occurrence of aboriginal archaeological resources at unexpected locations, the City shall require that if such potential resources are discovered during construction, development shall cease and a professional archaeologist shall be employed to examine and document the resources and determine appropriate mitigation measures.
6. The City shall encourage the continuation and expansion of Federal and State programs which provide tax and other incentives for the rehabilitation of historically or architecturally significant structures.

WATER RESOURCES ELEMENT

Background

The Colorado River is the single most important water resource in the General Plan study area and the region. This resource is tapped directly as a surface source for irrigation of farm crops in the Palo Verde Valley, and indirectly as a source of domestic water for urban uses and, to a lesser extent, for agricultural uses. The recharge of the groundwater resource is almost exclusively derived from infiltration from the Colorado River and irrigation canals and drains. Significant changes of the amount of groundwater in storage and the depth to groundwater are dependent upon the amount of acreage irrigated, the type and extent of drainage systems, the river channel alignment or profile, and pumpage or withdrawal.

Colorado River

The Colorado River entered the Palo Verde Valley region of the Basin and Range geologic province after or during the last period of the formation of the Bouse Formation, approximately 11 million years ago. The Bouse Formation was deposited in an embayment of the Gulf of California and is composed of tufa (modified limestone) and basal limestone, the thickest section of the Bouse Formation being 767 feet. Toward the end of the deposition of the Bouse Formation the study area was a vast body of water with mountains appearing as islands. After the withdrawal of the embayment of the gulf, the Colorado River entered the area, eroding much of the Bouse Formation. The established river continued to cut into the slowly rising mountains, carving the present-day canyons upstream.

The Colorado River between Parker and Cibola ranges in gradient from 1.2 to 2.0 feet per mile, giving an average of about 1.7 feet per mile. Flows of the river have been measured at several locations along its length, including at Parker Dam, Palo Verde Dam, and the Cibola Valley. In the 10 year period from 1957 to 1966, annual flows at Palo Verde Dam have generally decreased, being 7,783,000 acre feet in 1957 and 6,258,000 acre feet in 1966 (1

ac. ft. equals approximately 326,700 gallons). River flows have fluctuated from year to year, while average flows have been approximately 7,299,000 acre feet annually.

Various agreements and pacts have been entered into, which divert Colorado River water to users outside of the Colorado River basin, areas which otherwise lack adequate resources to support agriculture and especially urban development. These agreements include the Colorado River Compact of 1922, the Boulder Canyon Act of 1928, the Seven Party Agreement of 1931, and the 1964 U.S. Supreme Court Decree in Arizona vs. California. As the state implements the Arizona Water Project, additional diversions of Colorado River water will result. Currently, Arizona diverts approximately 2.0 million acre feet of the 2.8 million acre feet allotted to the state.

Groundwater Resources

Groundwater in the General Plan study area and the region occurs under artesian like conditions, but primarily as free groundwater. Most of the area's wells draw down from Colorado alluvium, which contains water under free water table conditions. Only a few wells drilled down through the Bouse Formation and into the underlying deposits contain water under such artesian conditions.

Sources of recharge to the groundwater reservoir of the area comes from the Colorado River, precipitation and underflow from bordering areas. The Colorado River recharges the aquifers directly by seepage in some reaches of the river and by diversion from the river in the form of seepage from canals and irrigated lands. Analysis of the groundwater contours in the region indicate that the river is the dominant influence on the groundwater reservoir and indicates the buildup of mounds and ridges beneath the irrigated lands and canals. Recharge from runoff represents only a small portion of the groundwater resource, and recharge from direct infiltration is even less significant. Infiltration of Colorado River water into the Palo Verde Valley aquifer averages approximately 114,000 acre feet per year.

Agriculture and River Diversion

Irrigation practices constitute the vast majority of the balance of aquifer recharge in the Palo Verde Valley. Large-scale diversion of the Colorado River to irrigate land began in July 1877 by Thomas H. Blythe. Blythe's plan was to provide for planned agricultural activities, including crop cultivation on the 40,000 acre "Blythe Ranch", which had been acquired under the Swamp and Overflow Act. In 1904 the Palo Verde Land and Water Company purchased the Blythe holdings and embarked on a program of furthering agricultural development. The Palo Verde Mutual Water District was organized in 1908, and the existing improvements of the Palo Verde Land and Water Company were exchanged for 60% of the stock in the mutual company.

In the years that followed, irrigation facilities were expanded and flood control dikes were constructed. The establishment of the Palo Verde Joint Levee District in 1918 and the Palo Verde Drainage District in 1921 furthered the protection of newly established farmlands and provided for much needed drainage facilities, respectively. The final major period of agricultural expansion began in 1923 with the creation of the Palo Verde Irrigation District and the combining of levee and drainage districts under one entity.

Today, with nearly complete agricultural development on the valley floor and the annual diversion of about one million acre feet, hydrologic conditions have been stabilized. Average depth to water beneath the irrigated lands within the Palo Verde Valley is approximately 6.5 feet. Depths to groundwater on the Palo Verde Mesa range from 70 to 300 feet below the surface. Much of the recharge to groundwater from irrigation is captured by the agricultural drain system; some returns directly to the Colorado River, and some, either from irrigation or leakage from the canals, moves westward under Palo Verde Mesa and then south and southeast returning to the Palo Verde Valley.

Exporting Allotted Water Resources

Recent efforts have been made to purchase a portion of the Palo Verde Valley agricultural diversion allotment for consumption in urban areas. Serious negotiations have been held to sell approximately 10% of the Palo Verde Valley allotment for 25 years, thereby removing approximately 21,700 acres from cultivation. Negotiations appear to have collapsed, not on the appropriateness of such action, but on how much farmers would be reimbursed.

The ample recharging of much of the groundwater basin is dependent upon the continued diversion of river water for irrigation. Groundwater levels within one-half mile of the river commonly fluctuate in response to changes in the stages of the river. Wells located within this area are less dependent upon irrigation seepage and more on river seepage for groundwater recharge. However, all of the current city wells occur beyond the river recharge area. The importance of agricultural irrigation to the continued viability of the city-tapped aquifer is of long-term significance.

Water Quality

The chemical quality of water is defined as the complex of chemical and physical properties imparted to water by its dissolved-mineral content. The availability of good quality water may have a limiting effect on economic growth in the valley. In recent years, use of Colorado River water has increased in the Parker and Palo Verde Valleys, and also further upstream and downstream, and there is some question whether the river will be able to sufficiently meet projected future needs.

The continued reductions in flow of the Colorado River, the increasing development of groundwater for irrigation, and the growing regional population with its need for more water will all contribute to a potential future shortage of good quality water.

Colorado River Water Quality

The chemical characteristics of nearly all the groundwater in the General Plan study area and the region are related to those of the Colorado River water because most of the area's groundwater originates from the river. During spring floods total dissolved solids in river water ranged as low as 200-300 milligrams per liter (mg/l), comprised mainly of calcium and bicarbonate. During low flow periods dissolved solids concentrations can reach 1,500 mg/l and occasionally higher. At the high concentration levels the major constituent is calcium sulfate.

Groundwater Quality

Groundwater quality varies significantly throughout the Palo Verde Valley. This is due in part from the concentrations of solids which leach out of cultivated fields and into the groundwater table. The levels of dissolved solids in existing city wells has ranged from 525 to 847 mg/l in the years of 1961-63.

Recent analysis of all City wells indicates that the average total dissolved solids were at nearly 1,400 mg/l. The average total dissolved solids measured in the four wells of the East Blythe County Water District (EBCWD) were approximately 1,450 mg/l. Other wells on the valley floor range from as low as 478 mg/l closer to the river or canals, to up to 14,900 mg/l near the southern end of the water basin.

Resource Quantities

As mentioned above, the Colorado River has seen a steady decrease in flows at the Palo Verde Dam. While some of these decreases in average flows can be attributed to seasonal variations in precipitation, much of the decrease can be attributed to diversion for agricultural and urban uses. Currently, approximately 391,000 acre feet of diverted river water recharges the Palo Verde Valley water table. Average per capita consumption by all city wells totalled approximately 340 gallons per day. Total pumpage from all city wells is currently approximately 993 million gallons, less than 1% of the annual recharge to the water table.

WATER RESOURCES GOAL

1. To promote and encourage the protection and wise utilization of the Valley's domestic and agricultural water supplies to assure the long-term viability and availability of clean and healthful water resources.

WATER RESOURCES POLICIES

1. Encourage the balanced use of the Valley's urban and agricultural lands to assure the coherent development of urban areas while assuring the long-term viability of agriculture which contributes to the sustaining of the groundwater basin.
2. Encourage the wise and careful use of the Valley's potable water resources and encourage the utilization of water conserving designs and technology to protect this vital resource.
3. Establish policies and programs which safeguard the Valley's water resources from contamination from agricultural chemicals, inefficient disposal of human waste and illegal or irresponsible dumping of other potentially toxic or hazardous wastes.
4. All development proposals brought before the City shall be reviewed for potential adverse effects on water quality and quantity, and shall be required to mitigate any significant impacts.

5. Encourage programs which support water conservation through the installation of water-saving devices in new homes, hotels, institutions and commercial and industrial developments.
6. Monitor, coordinate and cooperate with State and Federal agencies to assure the protection of the Colorado River resource from over-utilization and excessive export of river water to protect urban and agricultural interests and to assure the health of the various biological habitats of the Colorado River.
7. Actively consult and coordinate with the Palo Verde Irrigation District and valley farmers to assure the long-term protection and preservation of Palo Verde Valley allotted water rights.

AIR QUALITY ELEMENT

Background

The responsibility for establishing criteria by which air quality is measured rests with the California South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). The air quality of a particular locale is based upon the type and amount of pollutants being emitted and dispersed. The major categories of air contaminants are called primary and secondary pollutants. Primary pollutants are those which are a direct consequence of energy production and utilization.

Secondary pollutants are those which undergo chemical changes after being emitted. Smog is a secondary pollutant produced by photochemical reactions involving primary emissions. Primary sources and their pollutants are most often a direct consequence of the combustion of petroleum and other fuels resulting in the production of oxides of carbon, sulphur and nitrogen, a variety of reactive hydrocarbons and suspended particulates. Dust and other organic and inorganic particulates are also termed as primary pollutants.

The effect of various types of pollutants is dependent upon their source and accompanying climatic conditions. Primary pollutants typically affect only local areas and do not have time to disperse and to be chemically modified further. Secondary pollutants are those primary pollutants which do disperse and undergo chemical changes under conditions of high ambient temperatures and high rates of solar insolation. Principal secondary pollutants are termed oxidants and include ozone (O_3), peroxy nitrates, nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), and chemical aerosols.

Particulates

An important and particularly relevant consideration in evaluating the present air quality in the General Plan study area is blowing sand and dust conditions. The Palo Verde Valley and surrounding desert areas provide a natural and man made environment which combines very arid conditions and active soils disturbance. Fine soil particles, both organic and mineral, are easily moved by the wind.

Often soil particles that blow from cultivated fields contain 10 to 20 times as much organic material and phosphate as the heavier particles that stay on the fields. Soil particles do not ordinarily blow until wind velocities reach a threshold of about 13 miles per hour at one foot above the ground. The capacity of winds to carry soil is proportional to the cube of the wind speed.

About 90% by weight of suspended particulates are larger than 10 microns in diameter, but about 90% of the total number of particulates are less than 5 microns in diameter. In the respiratory tract very small particles of many substances produce injury by themselves, or may contain absorbed gases that are injurious. Suspended in the air, particulates of aerosol size can both scatter and absorb sunlight, producing haze and reducing visibility.

Air Quality Monitoring

The closest monitoring of air quality is conducted 100 miles west of Blythe in Indio, which is also subject to suspended particulates largely generated from arid desert and agricultural conditions. While the levels of suspended particulates measured in Indio may not be exactly representative of conditions in the Blythe area, they may provide some baseline point of reference for the region. Indio conditions for suspended particulates exceeded the State 24-hour standard ($>150 \text{ ug/m}^3$) more than 18% of the time sampled. Samples exceed the State 10 micron standard (PM_{10}^h) nearly 45% of the time.

Other pollutants are even less easy to infer and are not believed to constitute significant threats to public health in the Blythe region. Present air quality in the City can generally be expected to be equal or superior to that of any other community in the SCAQMD region, with the possible exception of occasionally high amounts of suspended particulates.

AIR QUALITY GOAL

1. To promote and encourage the protection and wise utilization of the region's air quality to assure long-term availability of clean and healthful air.

AIR QUALITY POLICIES

1. Encourage the safe and efficient use of urban lands and the movement of people and materials into and through the City and region as a means of reducing the impact of automobiles and other vehicles on local air quality.
2. The City shall require that all development proposals be reviewed for potential adverse effects on air quality and will require the mitigation of any potentially significant impacts.
3. The City shall encourage the development and implementation of programs which support the preservation of clean air through the installation of emission control devices in all processes or activities which have the potential to degrade air quality.

4. The City shall encourage the utilization of windbreaks in agricultural areas as a means of reducing the loss of topsoil and nutrients, and to reduce the transport of these soils into urban areas.
5. Promote the utilization of pedestrian and bike paths as a desirable alternative to the generation of unnecessary vehicular traffic in the City.
6. Encourage County, State and Federal implementation and enforcement of codes and regulations regarding the application of pesticides, fertilizers and herbicides in conjunction with agricultural activities and landscaped areas occurring within the City's incorporated limits.
7. Establish baseline air quality data through the consultation and cooperation of the South Coast Air Quality Management District as a means of quantifying current levels of contaminants and gauging the potential impacts of future development.

MINERAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Background

The importance of mineral deposits and their utilization is dependent upon their relative abundance and importance in commerce and industry. Deposits of rare or industrially important minerals require careful consideration before their availability is precluded by urban development. Mineral deposits which are common and readily available from several sources, for instance sand and gravels, pose less of a supply threat if their mining is precluded.

The nonrenewable character of mineral deposits requires their careful and efficient development to prevent unnecessary waste or exploitation. The excavation of mineral resources can also have significant environmental impacts which may only be marginally mitigated by surface mining reclamation plans. Evidence of mining, particularly surface mining in desert areas, can remain for centuries if not properly reclaimed through extensive importing of fill, grading, and replanting.

The Palo Verde Valley is formed within a north-trending depression known as the Colorado River Trough. This depression is a tectonic feature produced by millions of years of regional faulting, downwarping and sediment infilling. The Colorado River terraces within this area are the result of the erosion and deposition of surrounding bedrock which have been controlled by regional uplift and climatic changes over the past 2 million years. Sediments that underlay the General Plan study area are composed of gravel, sand, silt and clay, and are known to be thicker than 600 feet.

According to studies prepared as part of this General Plan update and research of other resources, no mineral extraction areas of current or known future potential importance exist within the study area. The primary potential mineral resource underlying the area is

sand and gravel contained in the alluvial deposits. The apparently small quantity of gravel size material within the sand deposits near the surface, the presence of silty matrix and the abundance of similar deposits throughout the area would make study area resources doubtful as significant or economically important commodities.

MINERAL RESOURCES GOAL

1. Control of the extraction of mineral resources in order to protect and preserve aesthetic and natural resources, assure the minimal disturbance of the environment, and to preserve important resources for timely future extraction..

MINERAL RESOURCES POLICIES

1. No additional surface or deep mining shall be permitted in the City or its sphere-of-influence without the extensive review of alternative resources.
2. A surface reclamation plan shall be required of any new surface or deep mining operation. The reclamation plan shall adequately address the restoration of the site and surrounding affected environment.
3. The City shall review and analyse existing mining operations in the sphere-of-influence, evaluating them as to useful life span and ultimate disposition.
4. The City shall coordinate and cooperate with the County, State and other appropriate agencies to assure the prudent, timely and environmentally sensitive extraction of mineral resources.

ENERGY RESOURCES ELEMENT

Background

The City of Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley are located in an area subject to high mean annual temperatures, creating a substantial need for air conditioning and related electrical energy demand. To a lesser extent, urban development in the Palo Verde Valley also utilizes natural gas to heat homes and businesses, provide process heat, and to prepare foods. Agricultural activity in the Valley constitutes one of, if not the, largest consumer of fossil fuels including petroleum products and natural gas.

Contemporary agricultural activities are heavily reliant upon petroleum fuels and lubricants for farm equipment. Fertilizers are manufactured from natural gas, and many of the pesticides and herbicides utilize petroleum products as feedstock for their manufacture.

The region, however, is rich in renewable energy resources including the Colorado River which is an important source of electrical energy, and the abundant sunshine and high temperatures which allow the use of solar thermal and photovoltaic energy throughout the year. As fossil fuel prices continue to rise with the inevitable depletion of this finite and nonrenewable resource, renewable energy sources, especially solar, will become more cost-competitive. The cumulative environmental impacts of burning fossil fuels to power transportation and generate electricity are also giving new impetus to cleaner and more benign alternative, renewable energy resources.

In the existing and future urban areas of the City, household, business and industrial users will constitute the principal consumers of energy resources. Precise figures on per capita or per household consumption of electricity and natural gas in the Palo Verde Valley is not available. Nonetheless, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) has developed a set of assumptions to define the general levels of consumption of energy on a use basis. Residential energy users, the City's largest consumer segment, on average utilize approximately 80,000 cubic feet of natural gas per year per single family and 47,000 cubic feet per year per multi-family residence. Electrical power consumption for the average residence is approximately 6,000 kilowatt hours (Kw) per year.

The production and utilization of energy resources are presently largely limited to nonrenewable fossil fuels. Only electrical energy has been effectively generated utilizing renewable energy sources such as the wind and solar radiation, and only limited capacity has been developed using these resources. The combustion of fossil fuels for the operation of vehicles, the heating of homes and businesses, and the generation of electricity is still the predominant energy source. In addition to reducing the long-term availability of these important nonrenewable resources, the burning of fossil fuels is directly associated with the production of air pollutants and hazardous waste materials.

The City is significantly limited in its control or influence over major energy decisions affecting the community. Our predominant energy resource, conventional fossil fuels, are an external resource with both availability and price governed by numerous factors. There is some indirect control and limited impact which can be made over the amount and types of energy sources the City and its residents consume.

The General Plan, as a policy document, can play an important role in assuring the construction of energy efficient dwellings and reward the owner or renter with substantially reduced heating and cooling bills. Energy conservation also plays a critical role in helping electric utilities to defer the construction of new power plants and keep down the cost of electricity. Energy conservation also reduces the generation of air pollutants.

ENERGY RESOURCES GOAL

1. To promote the conservation of energy and fuels of all types, thereby reducing the demand for conventional sources of energy while assuring a higher and affordable standard of living.

ENERGY RESOURCES POLICIES

1. Implement and enforce Title 24 building standards to reduce unnecessary energy use in new or substantially remodeled construction.
2. Implement and enforce the provisions of the State Solar Rights Act and Solar Shade Control Act to enhance the opportunities for the use of solar energy.
3. Promote energy conservation in public buildings and vehicles through the proper maintenance of equipment and facilities, decreased levels of cooling and heating, and efficient use of lighting fixtures and technology.
4. The City shall encourage the development of higher residential densities in areas reasonably close to major employment centers.
5. The City shall encourage owners and residents of existing developments to implement programs to use energy more efficiently and to explore alternative energy sources.
6. The City shall encourage the development of renewable energy sources and cooperate with other public and quasi-public agencies in furthering this policy.

OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

Background

Open space and conservation areas are those parcels or areas of land or water which are essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use, and which are to be so designated on the General Plan land use map. The purpose of the Open Space and Conservation Element is to assure the preservation of natural resources including plant and animal resources and their habitat. Areas of special ecological or scientific interest are also addressed in this element. Rivers, streams, estuaries, ruderal and riparian habitat, and watershed areas are also potentially important open space areas.

The Open Space and Conservation Element addresses the management and controlled production of natural resources including pasture lands, agricultural lands and other areas of economic importance for the production of food and fiber. The preservation and controlled extraction of major mineral deposits is also important and is addressed in this element.

This Element also addresses the reclamation of land and waters, the prevention and control of water pollution, continued viability of domestic water resources, regulation of land use in stream channels and associated bodies of water, prevention and control of soil erosion, protection of watersheds, and the preservation and development of mineral

resources. The Conservation Element is also that portion of the General Plan which enumerates City policy regarding the management of public lands of regional and state-wide significance, including the issues of access to desert and river areas.

Mandated Issues

Open space and conservation areas of recreation and aesthetic value include, but are not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value. These resources encompass the surrounding mountain areas, shore areas along drainage features, rivers and backwaters, and areas which serve as linkage or access corridors between major recreation and open space areas. These may include utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors.

Open Space and Conservation Element policies also address issues affecting public health and safety, including but not limited to areas requiring special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions, such as areas of unstable soils, flood plains, watersheds, sensitive biological resource areas, irrigation canals and agricultural and domestic water storage reservoirs, and other sensitive areas.

The premature conversion of important open space resources, especially agricultural and mineral resource areas, is also an important issue to be addressed in the Open Space and Conservation Element. State guidelines require the inclusion of policies in the General Plan which assure the continued availability of land for the production of food and fiber, the enjoyment of scenic beauty, for recreation and for the use of natural resources. The state guidelines presume that the discouragement of premature and unnecessary conversion of open space land to urban land uses is a matter of public interest and will be of benefit to urban dwellers because it will discourage noncontiguous development patterns, which can unnecessarily increase the costs of facilities and services to community residents.

State guidelines also require the development of an open space plan and policies which assure that each jurisdiction correspond and coordinate with County and State plans and programs. Through the General Plan land use map, the Blythe General Plan identifies open space and conservation lands, and land use policies have been developed which will provide reasonable protection of open space lands from premature development.

As is discussed in other elements, Open Space and Conservation policies and programs of the Blythe General Plan are geared to address the Colorado River resource both as a recreation, scenic and biological resource, but also as a natural force which must be respected for its hydrologic (flooding) potential. The health of the river and its availability for recreation, research and aesthetic appreciation are essential elements of the City's plan. The long-term preservation and management of domestic water resources, which are directly tied to the Colorado River and agricultural irrigation, are also appropriate to this element of the General Plan. The Water Resources Element of the General Plan discusses boating and other river resource issues in greater detail and will also examine issues of watershed and groundwater protection.

Reclamation of Lands

The Open Space and Conservation Element, in conjunction with the Land Use and other Elements, also addresses issues of land reclamation. One area of major importance in this regard is the abandoned City landfill located on the east side of Intake Boulevard and south of 14th Avenue. This area of approximately 80 acres occurs in the northeastern portion of the Goodman Slough and may be having an impact on the quality of water passing through this remnant of the Colorado River. Currently, the Goodman Slough provides drainage for irrigated agricultural lands to the north.

Other river and agriculture related drainage features provide important habitat for native and migratory birds and other animal species and these resources are intimately linked to the preservation of both river and agricultural resources. Many of these areas may require some sort of reclamation in addition to actions which assure their preservation. In other instances, the resource may have been already compromised to the point that their reclamation involves the development of these lands for urban uses. The abandoned City dump is a case in point.

Flood Control

Issues of flood control include drainage problems experienced in the urban areas of the City and along major drainage features of the study area including the Colorado River. The City may also be affected by 100 year storm drainage from McCoy Wash located northwest of the study area. Several agencies including the City, East Blythe County Water District, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation may be involved in addressing flood control issues depending on where this hazard occurs. A detailed discussion of flooding issues will be addressed in the Flooding and Hydrology Element of the General Plan.

Air Quality

As with other important resources, the conservation and preservation of regional air quality is an issue of national and even international scope. In the Palo Verde Valley air quality issues are largely limited to suspended particulates concern resulting from cultivation and other agricultural activities. Of particular is the aerial application of pesticides and herbicides which may also directly affect area residents and local groundwater resources. An extensive discussion of air quality issues can be found in the Air Quality Element of the General Plan.

Relationship To Other General Plan Elements

The Open Space and Conservation Element, as with other elements of the General Plan, overlaps and reiterates goals, policies and programs set forth in the Blythe General Plan. This overlap includes the Land Use Element, Scenic Highways Element, Biological Resources Element, and Safety Element. Inventories developed and included in these General Plan Elements and the accompanying Environmental Impact Report include documented and mapped natural vegetation, fish and wildlife habitats, water resources and watersheds, inventorying agricultural resource areas, and the assessment and mapping of open space areas for recreation, and for public health and safety purposes.

OPEN SPACE & CONSERVATION GOALS

1. The protection, preservation and timely utilization of open space resources assuring the provision of natural resources, outdoor recreation areas, protection of public health and safety, and the managed production of important natural resources.
2. The integrated development and linking of city, county and state open space areas through existing and planned trail systems.
3. The conservation and management of open space areas in order to protect and properly utilize environmental resources, guard against environmental hazards, provide enhanced recreational opportunities, and create an aesthetic character for the City and the region.
4. To reclaim those lands lost to useful utilization through neglect or impacts from prior use, disuse or environmental impacts.
5. Preservation of riparian and ruderal habitats as important breeding and foraging habitat for native and migratory birds and animals.
6. The effective and efficient management of environmental resources and hazardous areas through inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional coordination and cooperation.
7. The establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive mapping of open space, environmental resources and hazardous areas within the City, its sphere-of-influence and General Plan Study Area.

OPEN SPACE & CONSERVATION POLICIES

1. The City shall actively coordinate and participate in the protection of the Colorado River and other water bodies and their shores to assure the maintenance and enhancement of these vital open space resource areas.
2. The City shall actively coordinate and participate in the protection and preservation of fish and wildlife and their habitat, including those of rare and endangered species and those of economic importance.
3. The City shall restrict or prohibit, and shall encourage other jurisdictions to restrict or prohibit, development in areas of sensitive biological or scenic value.
4. The City shall actively coordinate with other jurisdictions and participate in the restriction or prohibition of development or incompatible uses in hazardous areas which may pose a threat to public health and welfare.

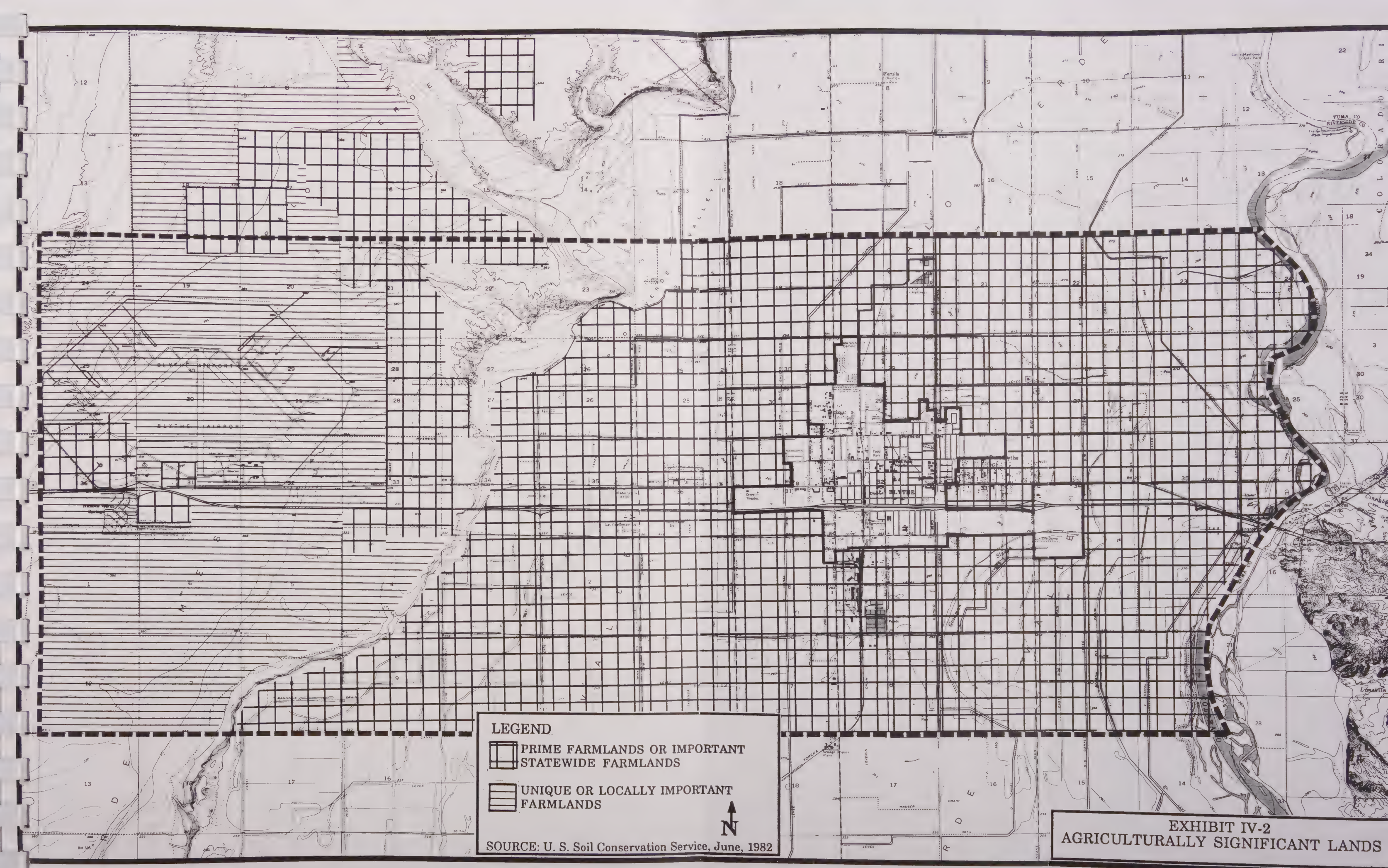
5. The City shall work closely with the Palo Verde Irrigation District and appropriate state agencies to assure the protection and preservation of agricultural lands and shall establish compatible land uses and parcel sizes.
6. Identified mineral resource areas of economic significance or importance shall be protected to assure their future availability and exploitation.
7. The City General Plan shall identify the types and locations of important public and private park and recreation areas and shall provide for their acquisition, development and management as important and essential open space areas.
8. The City General Plan shall identify, protect and improve access to the Colorado River recreational resource area and shall work closely with County and State agencies to assure the long term access to this important open space resource.
9. The General Plan shall clearly identify the types, locations and intensities of land uses which may be developed within the flood prone areas of the Colorado River and elsewhere in the Palo Verde Valley.
10. The General Plan shall require the provision of adequate open space and recreation facilities within multi-family and Planned Residential Developments (PRDs).
11. The General Plan shall recognize the value and appropriateness of utilizing Development Transfer Programs as a means of assuring the provision of adequate private and public open space and recreation areas.
12. Development and implementation of policies and programs which assure the preservation and proper utilization of environmental resources, including mineral resources for the benefit of the City and the region.
13. Assure the provision, access and enhancement of recreational resources and facilities to City residents, seasonal visitors and tourists through the establishment of public access corridors and recreation areas.
14. Establish policies and programs which preserve and protect the aesthetic resources of the City and the region, recognizing same as important assets vital to the character of the region and its continued attraction as a recreation area.
15. The Goodman Slough open space area shall be recognized as a "Biological Reserve" and an overall planning effort for its restoration and enhancement and use shall be initiated to assure its long-term preservation.
16. Maintain and enhance the scenic, biologic and recreation resources of the Colorado River through the coordinated regulation of discharge levels, land use, and access along the river.

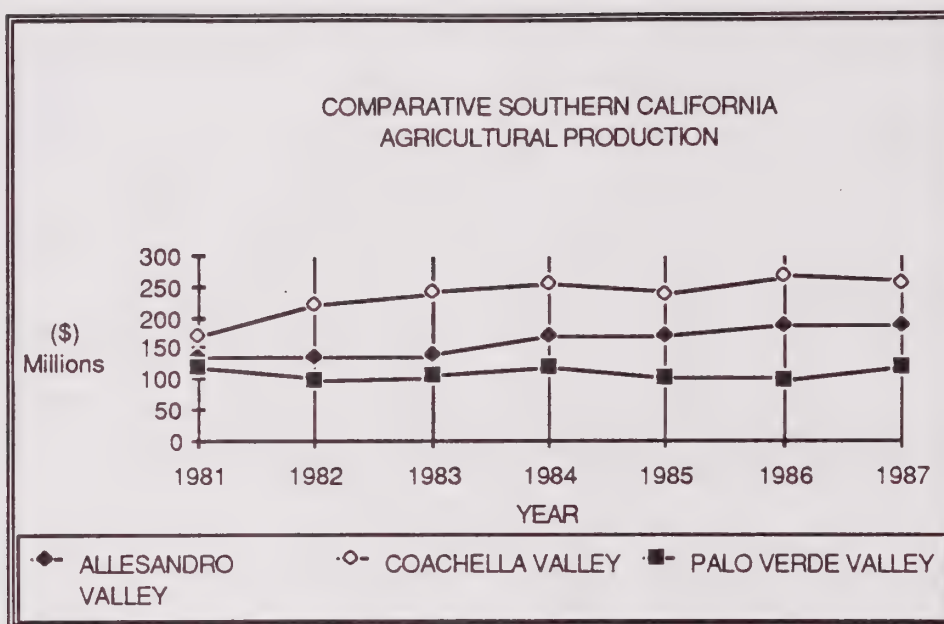
17. Coordinate and cooperate with Riverside County, the Palo Verde Irrigation District and appropriate state and federal agencies to assure the provision of Colorado River water at levels adequate to preserve the viability of agriculture in the Palo Verde Valley and riparian and ruderal habitats.
18. Coordinate and cooperate with the County of Riverside in assuring adequate setbacks of development along the Colorado River which will protect structures for human habitation from 100 year storm flows.
19. Establish land use designations and policies which discourage premature development of important agricultural lands and preserve same as important open space resources.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT

Background

The Palo Verde Valley is the third largest agricultural area in Riverside County, after Alessandro Valley (in the western portion of the County), and the Coachella Valley. As shown in the chart below, the agricultural economy throughout the County has not experienced significant growth in the last 5 years, and in some instances, has lost ground. The trend in the County as a whole, and the Palo Verde Valley in particular, has been flat for crop value.

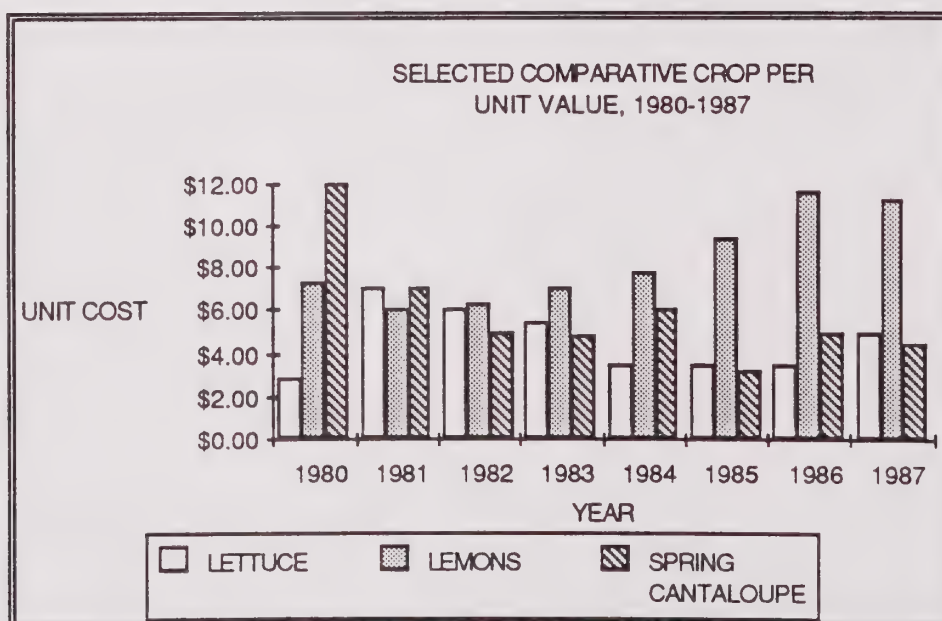
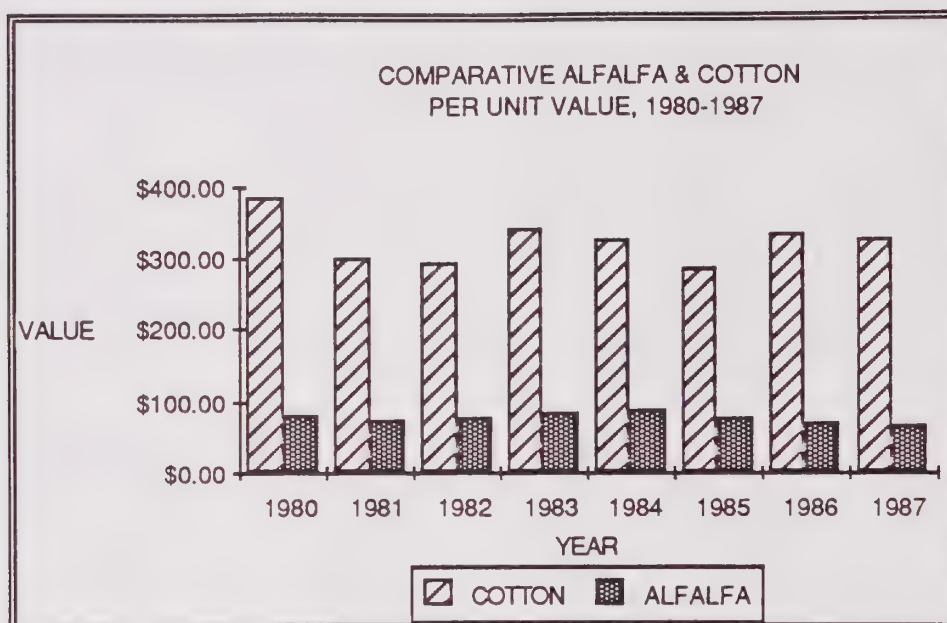




Principal Crops

Crops cultivated in the Palo Verde Valley, which constitute the bulk dollar value of production (1987), include alfalfa hay (15.3%), cotton (21.7%), lettuce (28.3%), cantaloupe (6.5%), and grains (2.7%). Total value of agricultural production in 1987 was \$118,956,200 resulting from the cultivation of a total of 128,198 acres. The following chart shows the value of the major crops grown in the Palo Verde Valley in 1987.

As mentioned above, the single largest crop in the Palo Verde is lettuce, followed by cotton and alfalfa. As shown below, the per unit cost of these crops has fluctuated greatly since 1980. Alfalfa in particular did not follow the overall trend in 1985, but has come back in the past two years. As is shown in the second chart below, individual crops vary greatly in value, and may not necessarily be profitable in an overall good year.



The success or failure of a crop locally does not necessarily reflect the per unit value. For example, the Palo Verde Valley produced 5.3 million cartons of lettuce in 1980, which had a value of approximately \$2.88 per carton. Since the 1981 crop yielded 5.8 million cartons, one would expect a lower per unit value; however, the 1981 crop had a value of \$7.01 per carton.

Such increases and decreases in farm prices cannot be controlled by Valley farmers, but are instead controlled by natural, economic and political events in other parts of the country and the world. This makes economic forecasting in the agricultural sector

difficult, if not impossible. Certain facts are unavoidable, however. The ever increasing number of small farms which will be bought by corporate entities will continue to make it difficult for the small farmer to survive economically, and will reduce the number of small farmers to an even smaller number than that existing today.

Increasing urbanization of the countryside in Blythe and elsewhere, will further decrease the total amount of land cultivated. As development continues in Blythe, land currently used for agriculture will be converted to residential, commercial or industrial development. Currently, the major agri-business industries operating in the area include a tomato packing plant, cotton gin operations, and agri-chemical and crop dusting operations. Many of the Valley's crops are presently taken out of the area for packing and shipping.

Development Potential

The agricultural core of the Valley surrounding the City has been unaffected by urban development during the past 30 years, and is likely to remain rural for many years to come. It is unlikely, however, that large expansion efforts will occur in this area, at least in the short-term. The City should make every effort to maintain its agricultural backdrop and to support farming interests in the area.

The potential for industrial spin-off from cotton production, i.e. fabric and textile mills, should be investigated. The fabric and textile mills in the U.S. are concentrated in the southeast United States, and more recently in Texas, where very large quantities of cotton are produced. While the availability of major transportation links is important, the ready availability of the product is even more critical. The Palo Verde Valley would therefore appear to have a limited potential for expansion in this agri-business sector.

Due to the current status of the farm economy and the comparatively limited level of farm production in the valley, it is unlikely that any major packing, canning, processing or other related industry will relocate in Blythe at this time. Furthermore, as discussed earlier in the Economic Development Element of the General Plan, the City should attempt to broaden and diversify its economic base, in order to avoid the potentially devastating effects of a sector-specific recession.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL

1. Maintain, protect and enhance the viability of the agricultural resources of the Palo Verde Valley, while providing for increasing urbanization within the City, Sphere and Study Area.

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES POLICIES

1. Develop and implement a Land Use Plan which provides an orderly and coherent expansion of urban development and services while protecting agricultural lands from premature development.

2. Recognize the agricultural sector as an essential part of the local economy and encourage continuation of farming activities on vacant lands as a method of assuring their on-going use and function as rural open space areas.
3. The City shall make every effort to protect and preserve important agriculture infrastructure including irrigation and drainage canals, crop dusting facilities, packing sheds, processing and materials handling facilities.
4. The City shall encourage the use of Williamson Act contracts and other forms of property tax relief to help assure the continued financial viability of cultivation of agricultural lands.
5. The City shall recognize the importance and relationship between continued agricultural activity and the long-term viability of the groundwater aquifer which services the City.
6. The City shall encourage the development of agriculturally based industry as a means of capturing the economic benefits of "value added" processing, packaging and/or distribution.

CHAPTER V: ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Introduction

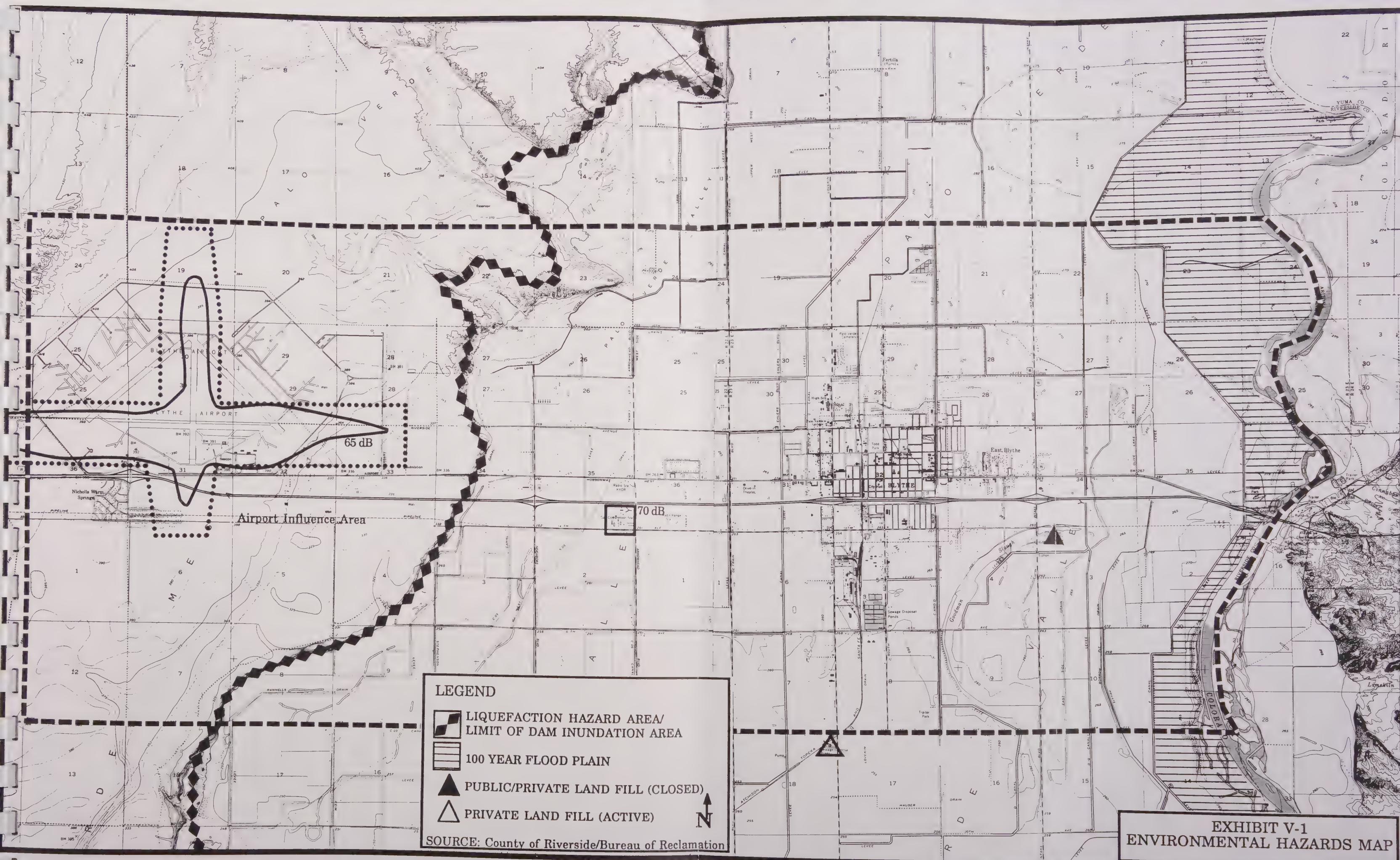
This chapter of the General Plan addresses those man-made and natural environmental hazards which occur in the City of Blythe, its Sphere-of-Influence and the General Plan Study Area. General Plan elements which discuss these hazards include Seismic Safety Element, Slopes and Erosion Element, Wind Erosion and Blowsand Element, Flooding and Hydrology Element, Noise Element, and Hazardous and Toxic Materials Element.

SEISMIC SAFETY ELEMENT





Background

The Palo Verde Valley in general and the General Plan study area occur in the lower Sonoran Desert. Topographically, the area is composed of two terraces (mesas) and the modern flood plain of the Colorado River. The average elevation of the study area is approximately 270 feet above mean sea level, and ranges from 430 feet on the Mesa to about 255 feet south of 18th Avenue. The existing urban areas occur approximately 5 to 10 feet above the surface of the river. The two terraces of the Palo Verde Mesa are composed of a lower terrace with an average elevation of 330 feet with a slope of up to 33% rising from the valley floor. The upper terrace rises much more gently and has an average elevation of 390 feet.

The City and the study area are located in a north-trending depression known as the Colorado River Trough. The trough is a geologic feature produced by millions of years of regional faulting, downwarping and sediment infilling. Faulting activity is believed to have ceased over 1 million years ago. The mesas are the result of the deposition and erosion of alluvial materials which were controlled by regional uplift and climate changes that have been active for the last 2 million years. Sediments that underlie the study area are composed of gravel, sand, silt and clay, and are known to be thicker than 600 feet.



LEGEND

-  LIQUEFACTION HAZARD AREA/
LIMIT OF DAM INUNDATION AREA
-  100 YEAR FLOOD PLAIN
-  PUBLIC/PRIVATE LAND FILL (CLOSED)
-  PRIVATE LAND FILL (ACTIVE)

SOURCE: County of Riverside/Bureau of Reclamation

**EXHIBIT V-1
ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS MAP**

Major Faults

There are no "active" or "potentially" active faults known to be located within or in close proximity to the study area. Neither are there any Special Studies Zones as designated by the State Geologist under the Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone Act of 1972. The nearest active fault is the San Andreas Fault zone, located approximately 50± miles southwest of the study area. The faulting potential of the San Andreas Fault is considered the greatest of all other faults in California. Other faults mapped in the nearby mountains are considered to be inactive since they are contained within the much older rocks of the region (over 65 million years). The potential for ground rupture in the study area due to faulting can be considered very low.

Seismicity

The San Andreas Fault Zone is considered capable of generating a maximum credible earthquake of magnitude 8.5, but this consideration does not include a time factor. The maximum probable earthquake expected for the San Andreas Fault is a magnitude 8.3, indicating that this magnitude earthquake could be generated along the fault during the next 100 years.

If a major event of magnitude 8.5 were to occur at the point nearest the General Plan study area, the peak rock accelerations would be expected to be 0.17g (1.0g equals the equivalent strength of gravity). At these locally low levels, peak ground acceleration would be expected to be the same or perhaps slightly less due to the thick deposits of underlying sediments. The predominant period for an 8.5 quake 50 miles from the study area would be 0.55 seconds with a duration of 15 seconds in the Blythe area. Similarly, the effects of ground shaking originating from an 8.3 maximum probable event would be expected to be slightly less.

Soils

All of the City and General Plan study area are underlain with sediments consisting of soil and alluvial materials composed of gravel, sand, silt and clay. Minor amounts of fine grained wind blown sand are also present locally. Subsurface soils consist of alluvial deposits primarily from the Colorado River, and to a lesser degree from the washes and alluvial fans located to the west and northwest. Alluvial units are divided into older and younger alluvium.

Younger alluvium (Qal) underlies the Palo Verde Valley and represents sediments which have accumulated during the last 15,000 to 10,000 years to the present on the modern Colorado River flood plain. The younger alluvium is variable in composition consisting of sand, silt and clay. Locally, clean sands have been encountered to depths greater than 21 feet. The thickness of the younger alluvium is approximately 90 to 125 feet.

The two river terraces of the Palo Verde Mesa are underlain by older alluvium (Qoal) and are composed of silt, sand and gravel, and range in age from 11,000 to 2 million years. These materials are poorly to strongly cemented and are over 600 feet thick.

Liquefaction

The Palo Verde Valley is within a zone of potential liquefaction. Liquefaction is the loss in strength of sandy soils resulting in a temporary transition of soil to a fluid mass, having a semblance of "quicksand". This phenomena may be expected to occur in areas of shallow ground water (generally less than 30 feet below the surface) when subjected to dynamic forces of ground shaking. Groundwater levels are generally quite shallow in the study area, with the exception of the mesa, and the valley floor liquefaction potential is characterized as "moderate".

Subsidence

Subsidence due to ground water withdrawal can occur in unconsolidated to semi-consolidated sediments containing confined or semi-confined sand and gravel aquifers interbedded with clayey sediments. The potential for subsidence is dependent upon the depths of and amount of water likely to be extracted from the aquifer.

On the valley floor where the above conditions occur the potential for subsidence is considered to be moderate to low based on the current hydrological conditions. Despite annual seasonal fluctuations in ground water levels of more than 6 feet, no evidence of major subsidence has been reported. However, a dramatic lowering of the water table beyond the normal range of fluctuations could strongly increase the potential for subsidence in the Palo Verde Valley.

SEISMIC SAFETY GOAL

1. To assess seismic and geotechnical conditions that pose significant hazards to life or property, and to identify significant development constraints to assure the protection of the public health and welfare.

SEISMIC SAFETY POLICIES

1. The City recognizes potential seismic and geotechnical hazards as significant development constraints and shall require site specific assessments to assure the safe and appropriate levels of development.
2. Mitigation measures addressing potential ground shaking shall consider the maximum credible earthquake (8.3) in the design of structures of a critical nature, including hospitals and emergency medical facilities.
3. Due to the potential for substandard soils and for liquefaction, the City shall require subsurface soils examinations and analyses, and the provision of appropriate recommendations for permanent structures.
4. Protect against overt or dramatic drawdown of the water table which might result in an increased potential for subsidence and damage to property.
5. Participate with County and other agencies in the development of a coordinated community response plan to disasters (earthquakes & others).

SLOPES AND EROSION ELEMENT

Background

Issues associated with slopes and erosion include soils erosion from wind, water, ground subsidence, expansive soils, and slope failure along the banks of the Colorado River and the Palo Verde Mesa. The likelihood of slope failure and erosion is related to natural conditions and the development of these areas. Conditions which should be addressed in the course of reviewing development plans for these areas include site designs, grading plans, landscaping techniques, retaining walls and other means of slope stabilization and erosion control. Trench wall stabilization is expected to be poor to moderate in the younger alluvium on the valley floor, and moderate in the older alluvium on the Mesa.

The General Plan study area is not located within an area classified as an active wind erosion zone, and problems related to wind blown sand and dust have been limited. However, two sources of potential problems are erosion of soils from recently tilled and destabilized agricultural lands, and from local accumulations of dune sand near the terrace slopes between the valley floor and the Palo Verde Mesa. These dunes have been mapped by the Soil Conservation District and consist of small hills of fine sand that have a slope ranging between 9 and 20 percent.

Colorado River

Development on or adjacent to the Colorado River poses the potential threat of bank erosion. Natural erosion caused by flooding along the river also threatens the river bank and improvements located nearby. As discussed in the Biological Resources Element, the banks of the river provide important habitat for native year-round and seasonal species. The recommendations to enhance and revegetate the banks with native trees and shrubs will help to stabilize these areas, as will the use of rip-rap where necessary.

Palo Verde Mesa

The terraces of the Mesa vary in percentage of slope from 3% to 30%. As mentioned above, some of these slopes include sand dunes. While the Mesa slopes are generally stabilized by naturally occurring vegetation including Mesquite, these steeper slopes are subject to destabilization from development activities. While development across gentle slopes appears to be feasible, those having a slope of 15% or greater should be avoided.

Erosion of agricultural soils is a concern of the U.S. Soil Conservation Service. Since irrigation practices are universal in the valley, the application of water is controlled so as to minimize the erosion of soils in this manner. Wind plays a more substantial role in eroding agricultural soils and can occasionally, but rarely, create small dust storms. The average wind speed in the Palo Verde Valley is approximately 8 miles per hour, with winds as high as 90 miles per hour occurring about once every 50 years.

SLOPES & EROSION GOAL

1. To ensure the protection of the public health, safety and welfare from conditions of steep and unstable slopes and areas subject to wind or water erosion which pose significant hazards to life or property.

SLOPES & EROSION POLICIES

1. Development proposals along the banks of the Colorado River shall be accompanied by an erosion control plan consistent and compatible with other applicable goals and policies of the Blythe General Plan.
2. Development proposals along the toe or slopes of the Palo Verde Mesa shall be accompanied by an erosion control and slope stabilization plan which is consistent and compatible with all other goals and policies of the Blythe General Plan.
3. No development shall be permitted on slopes exceeding 15 percent or in areas designated as open space or conservation areas in the Blythe General Plan.
4. Slopes and areas subject to erosion shall be recognized as significant constraints to development and will be fully assessed when considering development proposals.

WIND EROSION AND BLOWSAND ELEMENT

Background

The Palo Verde Valley is a unique structural trough that is generally bounded by high terrain, with the exception of the inlet and outlet for the Colorado River. Climate in the area is characteristic of the low desert areas of the Southwestern United States. An average of 4,000 hours of sunshine occur each year, amounting to more than 90% of the available day-time hours. In the hot summer months the valley receives direct sunshine about 95% of all available day-time hours. Precipitation is generally light, averaging less than 4 inches per year and occurring in the interval of just a few showers.

Relative humidity is moderate to low throughout the year. Occasionally higher humidity occurs with the northward movement of moisture from the Gulf of California, which also signals the possibility of thundershowers. Wind is moderate over the flat reaches of the valley floor, with an average speed of 8 mph being observed and occasional strong winds reported. Almost half of the observations show winds from the south or west, and about one quarter of the time wind blows from the northwest or north.

The conditions described present circumstances which rapidly dry out the soils and can induce thermal low conditions which generate dust devils and winds. The primary sources of dust and blowing sand are tilled agricultural lands and the eroded sands from

the mouth of the McCoy Wash and other washes to the west and southwest. Portions of the study area, primarily along the slopes of the Palo Verde Mesa terraces, are where deposits of sand predominate. Dust and fine silt from the fields are carried by the winds and deposited on other fields and in urban areas.

The impacts to urban areas of blowing sand and dust caused by wind erosion are largely limited to those areas which are unprotected or do not benefit from intervening development or some other obstruction. Therefore, areas of the City occurring adjacent to fields, highways and other expansive and exposed areas are substantially more vulnerable to dust and blowing sand. Areas presently exposed to these conditions may be protected as development occurs upwind of the source of sand and dust.

Wind erosion and blowing sand and silt, and the generation of fugitive dust are also associated with site grading for development of urban uses and can be significant sources of soil de-stabilization and erosion. These sources of fugitive dust and sand contribute to air quality degradation, and can create hazardous roadway conditions and cumulative property damage. Control and stabilization of disturbed on-site soils is essential to minimize impacts.

WIND EROSION & BLOWSAND GOAL

1. Assure the minimal impact of wind erosion and blowing sand which can pose significant hazards to life and property, and to develop policies and standards to assure the protection of the public health, safety and welfare.

WIND EROSION & BLOWSAND POLICIES

1. All development plans submitted to the City for approval shall include an erosion and fugitive dust control plan which assures the minimal adverse impact of site disturbance on surrounding lands.
2. Develop stabilization control measures to reduce or eliminate blowing dust and sand generated in conjunction with agricultural activities.
3. The grading of development sites shall occur within the framework of approved development plans and shall be initiated concurrent with full-scale site development.
4. Develop erosion control measures including site watering and other soil stabilization techniques to minimize fugitive dust and blowsand associated with site grading.

FLOODING AND HYDROLOGY ELEMENT

Background

Flooding hazards in the General Plan study area come from two sources, inadequate stormwater drainage facilities within the urbanized areas of the valley and from inundation caused by high water on the Colorado River. The former is an ongoing problem which has been addressed in a number of ways which are discussed below. The latter has been largely addressed through the construction of flood control and water storage dams on the river and irrigation canal levees.

Colorado River

While the flooding potential of the Colorado River has been substantially reduced in this century, flooding has occurred in the 1980s as a result of water released by dams at capacity and located upstream of the Palo Verde Valley with above average snow pack and precipitation in the Colorado River watershed. Other potential sources are from tributary drainages below Parker dam including McCoy Wash. Completion of the Hoover Dam in 1933 has prevented extreme flood conditions from reaching the Palo Verde Valley. Significant floods are still a distinct possibility. However, the magnitude, frequency and destructive potential have been reduced.

Maximum water flow in the Colorado River, adjacent to the General Plan study area averages 9,600 cfs (cubic feet per second) in the summer and 3,800 cfs in the winter. In the event of a 100 year flood, flooding would inundate the low lying cultivated areas near the Colorado River. The City and other areas of nearby urbanization would not be expected to be inundated. Recreational vehicle developments and the residential areas near Goose Flats would be inundated in a 100 year flood.

Existing roadways, canals and drainage ditches serve as effective barriers to shallow overbank flooding. The F Canal is considered to be effective for the control of a levee design flood. A levee design flood with a discharge of 75,000 cfs is considered to be approximately equivalent to a 100 year flood.

The Blythe urbanized areas could conceivably be affected by the inundation associated with the failure of upstream impoundments. These structures would include Parker Dam, Davis Dam and Hoover Dam. Although no current studies are available to quantitatively assess the extent of flooding that could occur, studies do indicate that in the event of failure of Parker Dam most of the Palo Verde Valley could be inundated. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency a flood map for the community has not been published. A quantitative report regarding the effects of inundation in the event of catastrophic failure of either the Hoover, Davis, or Parker Dams is currently under study by the U.S. Department of Reclamation. Flooding as a result of seismically induced waves is considered to be low due to the low seismic potential for the area.

Existing City Facilities

Stormwater flows in the City including those resulting from very moderate rainfalls, cause significant ponding in certain areas. The general topography of the General Plan study area, and the currently urbanized areas particularly, is extremely flat with several local depressions with no natural drainage outlets. In addition to the natural topography, man-made barriers such as canals, drainage ditches, streets and railroads form the major boundaries for stormwater runoff within the study area. As part of the construction of Interstate 10 in the early 1970s, the California Department of Transportation constructed a catch-basin/storm drain facility to convey runoff from the north side of I-10 to the south side.

Major storms in the study area are characterized by an intense rainfall over a relatively short period of time. The intensities of storms are gauged upon their frequency and intensity. For instance, a two-year storm will be one which provides the maximum amount of rainfall at an average of once every two years. It follows then that an 100-year storm will have an intensity and duration seen only about once every 100 years and will represent a substantially greater threat.

Existing and future development in the urbanizing portions of the study area current suffer from impoundment of storm runoff due to inadequately sized or non-existent storm water facilities. Continued development will add to runoff and possible damage to structures. It should be noted that because of the flatness of the terrain, erosion from rapid runoff will not normally occur. It is therefore doubtful that structures would be undermined but rising water alone could cause extensive damage.

An analysis of the City storm water hazard and the need for facilities was examined in the report City of Blythe Master Plan of Stormwater, January 1984. The study examined areas of existing urbanization and most of the sphere-of-influence. The study calculated 10 year and 100 year peak storm water flows in cubic feet per section for each subsection the study area was divided into.

The existing primary system of storm water removal consists of nine stormwater pumping stations located at various sites throughout the City. Each pumping station is intended to convey the stormwater from its particular drainage area to an adjacent irrigation canal. Both the I-10 drainage and a "clear water" drain system of limited capacity also empty into the primary storm water system. Total pumping capacity of the nine pumping stations in urbanized areas is approximately 11,035 gallons per minute. The 10 year peak runoff within the entire study area is approximately 426,600 gallons per minute. Within the drainage area, Pumping Station No. 1 has a capacity of 1,485 gpm while the 10-year storm peak flows are approximately 13,950 gpm. While other conditions come into play in determining level of inadequacy of pumping facilities within each drainage district, the example serves to illustrate the potential for overwhelming the existing storm water system. It is the conclusion of the Master Plan of Storm Water that the existing system is undersized.

The existing pumping facilities also are presented with an additional problem caused by the reliance on utility electric power to operate pumps. Since the most frequent occurrence of power outages is during intense (electrical) storms, these pumping units could be rendered inoperable at the time when these units are most urgently needed. As a result of the above deficiencies and the varying ages of the pumping stations, an evaluation and upgrading of structural and mechanical systems is underway. Special emphasis should be given to the feasibility of providing alternative sources of power.

Site Specific Problems

Currently, problems exist throughout the City and the study area which are associated with the limited size of existing facilities and the physical constraints of the area. Portable pumps must occasionally be used in some locations to augment existing systems. A few problem areas are located along Hobsonway and Lovekin Boulevard where a substantial amount of stormwater impoundment takes place during and after large storms.

The City has recently annexed a problem area in the vicinity of Intake Boulevard and I-10. The City has just completed a major storm water catch basin and pumping station construction located south of I-10 and east of Intake Boulevard. This area should now be safe from storm flows and development is expected to proceed in the near future.

Mitigation Measures/Policies

The City Master Plan of Storm Water makes specific recommendations to provide protection in the event of a 10-year storm. However, the cost of implementing the system effectively prohibits its development. Additionally, there is growing reluctance on the part of the Palo Verde Irrigation District to take additional storm water runoff into the canal and drain system, due to recent court cases finding districts liable for property damage associated with drainage from storm runoff.

In the past few years, the City has initiated development policies to assist in relieving or not further aggravating existing conditions. These include the requirement that new commercial, public/quasi-public and multiple family projects shall develop retention facilities capable of retaining 10-year storm runoff on-site. The City should also consider instituting a Drainage Impacts Fee to pay for upgrading of the drainage and pumping systems.

FLOODING & HYDROLOGY GOAL

1. Assess storm flow flooding conditions that may pose significant hazards to life and property, and develop policies, standards and programs to assure the highest practical protection of the public health, safety and welfare.

FLOODING & HYDROLOGY POLICIES

1. Development proposals shall be accompanied by hydrology studies and drainage plans which calculate and provide for the retention of 10-year storm flows on-site.
2. The City shall adopt and implement a flood damage prevention ordinance to promote the public health, safety and general welfare, and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions within the City.
3. As part of a flood damage prevention ordinance, the City shall consider instituting a Drainage Impact Fee, based on the type and intensity of proposed development, which shall be applied to the upgrading and expansion of drainage facilities.
4. The City shall coordinate and cooperate with the Palo Verde Irrigation District to assure the greatest utilization of PVID facilities for drainage purposes, while protecting both the City and the District from possible liability.
5. Where drainage facilities are abandoned by the Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) the City shall move to retain these facilities for use in the City storm water drainage system.
6. The City shall restrict development in the 100-Year flood plain of the Colorado River to non-permanent habitation facilities such as recreational vehicle parks and other non-habitation development.
7. Future flood control facilities developed in the City shall, in conjunction with on-site retention/detention within new development, be adequate to protect affected improvements from 10-Year storm flows.

NOISE ELEMENT

Background

Concern regarding the potential psychological and physiological impacts of noise pollution has increased significantly in recent years. Excessive noise levels are not only a potential annoyance, but can constitute a significant health threat resulting in temporary or permanent hearing loss and mental distress. The most common noise generators within the City are traffic and construction activities. The City is also impacted by train traffic on the Santa Fe Railroad lines which pass through the center of existing urbanized areas. Occasional aircraft also contribute to the noise environment. While construction noise usually has a finite life, vehicular, rail and air traffic noise may actually increase with the passing of time.

The most common sound range to which humans are exposed is between 40 dB (very quiet) and 100 dB (very loud). Conversation at three feet is roughly 60 dB, while loud motor noises equate to 110 dB which can cause discomfort. Due to the logarithmic nature of the decibel scale, doubling the sound energy of a noise source only increases the decibel rating by 3 dB. However, due to the nonlinearities in the mechanism of the human ear, a sound must be nearly 10 dB higher than another to be judged twice as loud. Since every increase in loudness by 10 dB doubles the loudness, a 100 dB sound will be 16 times louder than a 60 dB sound.

Noise impacts are commonly evaluated in the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) noise index which reduces to a single number the combined effect of a daily noise exposure. The value computed by this method includes corrections for time of day, and is averaged over 24 hours. Weighting factors of 3 and 10 are employed to account for increased sensitivity in the evening (7 PM to 10 PM) and nighttime (10 PM to 7 AM) periods, respectively.

The primary source of noise in the City is transportation related. Most transportation noise is highly predictable if certain data concerning operating characteristics are available. Computer models and simulations are used to compute the noise environment along transportation routes based upon the vehicle operating characteristics. These predictions, provided by existing quantitative models, have been verified by sound measurements at strategic and sensitive receptor locations near the major transportation routes including Interstate-10 and the Santa Fe Railroad.

Noise Measurements

The noise model verification measurements were made on May 11th and 12th, 1988. These measurements were made at specific locations throughout the study area by staff of the acoustical engineering office of Walker-Selano Associates. Data collected at the following locations have been used in conjunction with the results of mathematical modeling to establish noise exposure levels in these noise sensitive or high impact areas. Noise monitoring was conducted at the following sites:

1. Community of Mesa: approximately 1,200 feet south of I-10 and 400 feet west on the north-south runway of the Blythe Airport. Daytime ambient noise levels were approximately 50 dB(A) with occasional intrusive peaks of 62 to 65 dB(A) from local traffic.
2. Palo Verde High School: at the southern portion of the parking lot approximately 25 feet west of the curb of Lovekin Boulevard. Traffic was the primary noise source generating an ambient noise level of approximately 60 to 63 dB(A). The maximum intrusive noise level exceeded 83 dB(A) due to the passage of an improperly muffled vehicle.
3. Margaret White School: at the southeast corner of Barnard Street and Broadway. Traffic was the primary noise source, resulting in an ambient noise level of approximately 60 to 66 dB(A). Intrusive vehicle noise in one instance exceeded 85 dB(A).

4. Cottonwood Lane and I-10: at the northern end on S. Cottonwood Lane, approximately 50 feet south of the I-10 right-of-way fence. I-10 traffic dominates the noise environment, resulting in daytime ambient noise levels of approximately 65 dB(A). Maximum intrusive noise levels exceeded 82 dB(A) caused by the passage of heavy trucks.
5. Alice Lane and Donlon Street: approximately 60 feet south of the I-10 right-of-way fence. I-10 traffic dominates the noise environment, resulting in a daytime ambient noise level of approximately 63 dB(A) and late night ambient noise levels of approximately 66 dB(A). The maximum intrusive noise level approached 78 dB(A) during the passage of heavy trucks.
6. Palo Verde Hospital: at the northeast corner of Murphy Street and First Street. Ambient noise levels were influenced by I-10 traffic and local conditions, resulting in ambient evening noise levels approaching 58 dB(A) and late night levels of 56 dB(A). Occasional intrusive peaks approaching 80 dB(A) were due to passage of local traffic on Murphy and First Streets.
7. Ruth Brown School: at the east side parking lot, approximately 50 feet west of the center line of Seventh Street. The ambient noise environment consisted of low background levels of approximately 51 to 52 dB(A). Average noise levels during the morning and afternoon were approximately 58 to 60 dBA. Intrusive noise peaks came from local traffic on Seventh Street.
8. Appleby School: at the northeasterly portion of the parking lot west of Third Street and adjacent to the Appleby City Park. The ambient noise environment of 55 to 57 dB(A) is primarily generated by I-10 traffic approximately 600 feet to the north. Occasional intrusive noise peaks reached 72 dB(A) caused by local traffic on Third Street.
9. New Margaret White School Site: located on N. Broadway approximately one-quarter mile north of Chanslor Way and at the northerly boundary of the future school site. Presently, the ambient noise environment is very low, less than 40 dB(A). The average mid-morning noise level was approximately 57 dB(A). Intrusive noise levels were 60 to 70 dB(A) generated by the passage of individual vehicles on Broadway.
10. Convalescent Hospital: measurements were taken from the north side of Chanslor Way, approximately 20 feet north of the curb. Morning and afternoon ambient noise levels were approximately 61 to 64 dB(A). Late night ambient noise levels of approximately 49 dB(A) was set by I-10 traffic. Intrusive noise peaks were generated by occasional passage of vehicles on Chanslor Way.
11. Interstate-10 at Agricultural Inspection Station: at the entrance to the Blythe Marina RV park at the intersection of Blue Ridge Road and Riviera Drive, immediately south of the Agricultural Inspection Station. Ambient noise levels are determined by I-10 traffic, with average daytime noise levels of approximately 64 dB(A) and average late night levels of about 60 dB(A).

12. SCG Compressor Station: immediately south of facility approximately 35 feet south of the centerline of 14th Avenue. Ambient noise levels were a constant 70 dB(A) from compressor engines. Intrusive peaks were generated by the occasional noisy vehicle passing by.

Aircraft Noise

The Blythe Airport is located approximately 4.5 miles west of the downtown area and is not a source of significant noise impacts within the present city limits. There are two scheduled arrivals and departures each day of commercial twin-propeller commuter-type aircraft and variable numbers of unscheduled general aviation operations. The airport is also occasionally used by military aircraft for practice exercises. Seasonal crop dusting also contributes to the minor amounts of aviation noise.

Railroad Noise

Railroad operations are not a significant source of noise impacts on a CNEL basis, although individual train passage generates high noise levels in the immediate vicinity of the right-of-way. Presently, there are only two scheduled operations, one out-bound at 7:00 A.M. and one returning at approximately noon each day. This operation schedule falls within the exempt classification in the State Noise Standards (four operations a day maximum with no night operations) and thus would not be subject to the noise control requirements.

Noise Mitigation Measures

Noise mitigation or abatement will have varying levels of effectiveness depending upon the noise source, site conditions, geography, and land uses. Noise issues must be carefully considered in the development of the Land Use Element and maps. Zoning designations provide another land use control mechanism which assures appropriate uses near significant noise sources. The Circulation Element must also be designed to protect the City's prime residential areas and assure compatible land uses.

In areas subject to significant or potentially significant noise impacts, site planning and design standards are geared to provide adequate noise impact mitigation. Mitigation measures include the use of buffer zones, walls and landscaping between residences and roadways. In addition, site planning and building orientation can provide shielding of outdoor living spaces and orient openable windows away from roadways. Effective acoustical materials can also be incorporated into building windows and walls which adequately reduce outdoor noise.

Noise and Land Use

The compatibility of a land use is directly related to the user's sensitivity to noise, the noise environment in which the use occurs and the potential for impact mitigation. Particularly sensitive land uses include residences, schools, libraries, churches, hospitals, and nursing homes. Also included are parks, golf courses and other outdoor activity areas. Less sensitive land uses include commercial uses, hotels and motels, playgrounds and neighborhood ball parks, and outdoor spectator sport arenas. Least sensitive to noise are heavy commercial and industrial uses, transportation, communication and utility land uses. The following exhibit sets forth various land uses and levels of compatible exterior noise.

EXHIBIT V-2
COMMUNITY NOISE AND LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

LAND USES	CNEL (dBA)					
	50	55	60	65	70	75 80
Residential Land Uses: Single & Multi-Family Dwellings, Group Quarters, Mobile Homes	A	B	B	C	D	D
Transient Lodging: Hotels & Motels	A	B	B	C	D	D
School Classrooms, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes & Convalescent Hospitals	A	B	B	C	D	D
Recreation Land Uses: Golf Courses, Open Space (with walking, bicycling or horseback riding trails, etc.)	A	B	B	C	D	D
Office Buildings, Personal, Business, and Professional Services	A	B	B	C	D	D
Commercial Land Uses: Retail Trade, Movie theaters, Restaurants, Bars, Entertainment Activities, Services	A	B	B	C	D	D
Heavy Commercial/Industrial: Wholesale, Manufacturing, Utilities Transportation, Communications	A	B	B	C	D	D
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphi-theaters, Music Shells (may be sensitive receptors or generators)	B	B	B	D	D	D
Sports arenas, Outdoor Spectator Sports	B	B	B	D	D	D

Source: Federal Highway Program Manual Vol. 7, Ch. 7, Sec. 3, 1982

Explanatory Notes

A. Normally Acceptable: With no special noise reduction requirements assuming standard construction.

B. Conditionally Acceptable: New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirement is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

C. Generally Unacceptable: New construction is discouraged. If new construction does proceed, a detailed analysis of noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.

D. Land Use Discouraged: New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.

NOISE GOAL

1. Preserve and promote community noise levels that complement and are consistent with the City Land Use Plan and the character of the City as an essentially rural community.

NOISE POLICIES

1. Develop a noise ordinance that includes procedures and guidelines which serve as mitigation measures for the abatement of unnecessary, excessive and annoying noise exposures.
2. Protect noise sensitive land uses such as residences, hospitals, and convalescent homes from high noise levels from both existing and future noise sources.
3. Project designs for areas subject to existing or future 60 dB CNEL contours or greater shall be accompanied by a Noise Control Plan to include measures which assure interior noise levels for residential development not exceeding 45 dB CNEL, as required by Title 25 (California Noise Insulation Standards).
4. Land uses that are compatible with higher noise levels will be located adjacent to major roads and other significant noise sources.
5. Develop a circulation plan that is consistent with the rural residential character of the community and which encourages cross-city travel on major roadways and I-10, thereby decreasing noise impacts in residential areas of the community.
6. City shall direct City Police, County Sheriff and Highway Patrol to enforce statewide vehicle noise regulations, including Sections 23130, 23130.5, 27150, and 38275 of the California Vehicle Code.
7. The City shall consult and coordinate with CalTrans on the development and implementation of noise abatement or mitigation measures which establish and maintain long-term compatibility of existing and future land uses with the Interstate-10 corridor.
8. The City shall encourage County Animal Control to utilize solutions-oriented public relations, in addition to the use of citations, as a means of addressing and eliminating barking dog complaints.
9. The City shall establish and maintain a noise complaint file to include such sources as the Police Department, County Animal Control, and the City Planning Department.
10. Every reasonable effort shall be made by City, County and State law enforcement and fire departments, and by private ambulance services, to limit siren use to that necessary to effectively provide service.

HAZARDOUS AND TOXIC MATERIALS ELEMENT

Background

The United States, and Southern California in particular, have taken part in the rapid and innovative development of new technologies, technological and chemical processes, and new sources of energy. One crucial result of these developments has been the purification and synthesis of chemical elements and compounds which have proven highly toxic and which do not typically occur in nature. These advances have contributed to our ability to produce such diverse products as bread and beef, construction materials, tools, clothes and toys, medicines and advanced consumer technologies. Unfortunately, many of these advances in productivity and new technologies have resulted from the use of many hazardous and/or toxic materials. Until recently, the dangers of many of these materials and the difficulty they present in their safe disposal was not well known.

Hazardous materials commonly used today include potentially injurious substances such as pesticides, herbicides, toxic metals and chemicals, liquified natural gas, explosives, volatile chemicals, and nuclear fuels and waste products. Biological wastes have also joined the collection of hazardous waste materials. From plastics to pesticides, the United States and many of the world's economies are significantly dependent upon consumer, agriculture, medical and industry products. These products are themselves toxic, or are the end-product of processes which utilize toxic materials including the production of polymers and computer semiconductor chips.

Continued innovation and advances in technology can be expected to result in a greater amount of trace metals and chemical compounds, some 63,000 of which are in regular use in the United States. More than 2,000 new or modified compounds are developed each year. Being ubiquitous, chemical compounds are refined, manufactured, transported, stored, utilized and then disposed of. Toxic wastes represent one of the most serious and widespread threats to the environment.

Although not immediately apparent, the Palo Verde Hospital may be a producer of hazardous wastes in the City. In conjunction with its medical services the hospital is subject to regulation as a "small quantity generator," as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency. In compliance with appropriate regulations, the Palo Verde Hospital may have to develop and implement a "Hazardous Waste Management Plan" that outlines policies and procedures for handling, storage, use and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes.

Already, in western Riverside County, ground and surface water contamination from the Stringfellow Acid Pits has brought the dilemma of toxic waste disposal home to the area. The Palo Verde Valley has not been the site of any documented illegal chemical dumps as

have many other portions of Southern California's deserts. There have been several instances of groundwater contamination from leaking gasoline storage tanks located at retail outlets within the City. Current state law requires retrofitting of obsolete tanks and cleaning up of contaminated sites.

There is some evidence of ground water contamination from liquid human waste disposal ponds located at the Riverside County Dump on the alluvial plain on the Big Maria Mountains approximately six miles north of the City on Midland Road. The potential for ground water contamination also exists at the abandoned city dump located east of Intake Boulevard and south of 14th Avenue. Since migration of contaminants can occur quite rapidly in the Palo Verde Valley, it is particularly important that such cases be reported and addressed immediately.

Hazardous Materials Ordinance

The City shall prepare and adopt an ordinance to control and regulate the primary and incidental storage of hazardous and/or toxic materials and waste products. The extensive use of agricultural chemical, the bulk storage of petroleum products, the storage of solvents, adhesives and other industrial materials should also be regulated.

The adoption of a Hazardous Materials Ordinance, in conjunction with the Riverside County Waste Management Plan, shall define materials which are hazardous, minimize the potential of an accidental discharge, provide early warning in the event of an accident, minimize the potential for groundwater contamination, and provide a means of inventorying , monitoring and inspecting the storage of hazardous materials in locations throughout the City. The ordinance should require the securing of a permit for the storing of any hazardous material, whether above or below ground.

In order to accomplish its objectives, the Hazardous Materials Ordinance shall provide standards for containment, site specific management plans, materials inventories, accident reporting and cleanup procedures, shall authorize City inspections, and enable civil and criminal penalties for violations of the ordinance.

HAZARDOUS & TOXIC MATERIALS GOAL

1. To adopt and implement ordinances, policies and guidelines which assure the safety of the public from toxic or hazardous materials and wastes.

HAZARDOUS & TOXIC MATERIALS POLICIES

1. Inventory all sites for the production, use, storage, and disposal of any hazardous materials, as well as roads and rail lines likely to be used for their transport.
2. Encourage the development and utilization of innovative and safe technologies for the handling and disposal of hazardous and toxic materials and discourage their disposal in landfills.

3. Assure adequate environmental review of facilities for the manufacture, storage, use or disposal of hazardous and toxic materials in the City or the region.
4. Assure the regulated use of herbicides, pesticides and other hazardous chemicals associated with agricultural activities or the maintenance of landscaped areas in the City.
5. Coordinate and cooperate with appropriate agencies for the testing and monitoring of underground gasoline storage tanks for leakage.
6. All septic tanks, upon completion of their use, shall be properly removed from service.
7. The Palo Verde Hospital shall continue to comply with regulations, standards and guidelines established by the Environmental Protection Agency, the State of California, the County of Riverside and the City of Blythe relating to the handling, storage, use, transport and disposal of hazardous waste.
8. Draft, adopt and implement a Hazardous Materials Ordinance which provides the City with the authority to review applications for storage of hazardous or toxic materials within the City, and to assure the proper handling and disposal of hazardous wastes.
9. The City shall take a pro-active role in the regulation of hazardous materials management, transport and disposal, ensuring that the City has a voice in issues affecting the region.

CHAPTER VI: PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Introduction

This chapter of the General Plan addresses the public services and facilities needed to support development in the City of Blythe, its Sphere-of-Influence and the General Plan Study Area. General Plan elements which discuss these services include the Water and Sewer Element, Utilities Element, Fire Protection Element, Police Protection Element, Schools and Libraries Element, Health Services Element, and the Emergency Preparedness Element. The level of services and facilities needed for residential, commercial and industrial development is directly related to the intensity of development. The economic life of the City is tied to the level of services, the types and intensities of land use, the level of demand for services, and the revenue generating potential of urbanizing areas.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICES ELEMENT

Background

Domestic Water

Domestic water for the General Plan study area is obtained from wells which tap groundwater stored in the unconsolidated fill of the Palo Verde Valley. The Palo Verde Valley covers an area of about 575 square miles on the west side of the Colorado River. The north portion of the water basin is bounded by the Big and Little Maria Mountains. The unconsolidated alluvium eroded from the surrounding mountains constitutes the water bearing strata of the valley and these are quite porous and permeable. Vertical and horizontal groundwater flow (mixing) within the water basin is generally unrestricted, with minor occurrences of clay layers which restrict flows.

Groundwater Basin

Most of the well water drawn from the Palo Verde ground water basin is from older alluvium of the Pleistocene and younger alluvium of the Holocene age. These alluvium

deposits, particularly the Pleistocene, are composed of well-sorted sands, gravels, boulders, silt, and clay. These alluvium yield large quantities of water to wells, and may produce from 1,000 to 2,500 gallons per minute.

The Palo Verde Valley water basin generally drains from north to south. Recharge to ground water occurs as seepage from the Colorado River and especially from diverted river water used to irrigate crops. Drains constructed to control ground water levels are good indicators of actual ground water levels beneath the surface. While the continued viability of the Palo Verde Valley ground water basin appears secure, a significant reduction in river water diverted into the Palo Verde Valley, and continued and prolonged lowering of water volume on the Colorado River, could result in a lowering of the ground water basin.

Metropolitan Water District/PVID Negotiations

Agricultural irrigation water is provided by the Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) which operates and maintains river diversion, canals and drainage facilities in the Palo Verde Valley. As discussed elsewhere, irrigation water is an important source of groundwater recharge. The Metropolitan Water District (MWD) has been negotiating with the Palo Verde Irrigation District to purchase a portion of the District's allotment. MWD proposes the rotating removal of approximately 21,700 acres from cultivation to allow MWD to divert an additional 100,000 acre feet per year to its system over a 25 year period. Negotiations have stalled on the amount to be paid for this water.

Water Quality

Ground water in the Palo Verde Valley ranges in dissolved-solids concentrations from about 500 to 13,000 milligrams per liter. This indicates that water quality ranges from good to poor for domestic supply, irrigation, live stock, and industrial uses. The various analyses conducted yearly since 1922 indicate that the major constituents in the water are sodium (Na), chloride (Cl), sulfate (SO_4), and bicarbonate (HCO_3). Many of the constituents rarely occur in objectionable concentrations.

City Water System

The City of Blythe domestic water supply is provided by 10 city wells which draw water from the ground water basin. Total combined output of city wells is estimated at approximately 5,264 gallons per minute. The city currently has approximately 2.2 million gallons of elevated storage in one large storage tank located on Commercial Street retrofitted with new booster pumps. City water lines range from 4 inches to 16 inches in diameter, and constitute nearly 40 miles of pipeline.

An ongoing well refurbishing program has been under way to assure the adequate and dependable delivery of domestic water. Plans are currently being developed and system construction is under way to increase domestic water production and to upgrade portions of the distribution system. As development continues over the twenty year planning period new wells and distribution systems will be required to maintain the necessary level of pumping (well) and storage capacity to meet the demand for domestic uses and to provide adequate water for fire protection.

Sewage Treatment/Disposal

The City of Blythe owns and operates a regional sewage treatment facility which treats waste from the City and the unincorporated community of East Blythe. This facility occurs approximately 1 mile south of the current city limits on Broadway. Two separate collection systems (City and East Blythe) are used to convey domestic wastes to the city treatment plant. Current rated plant capacity is approximately 1.5 million gallons per day (GPD).

Current average daily flows range from a high of approximately 1.4 million GPD to a low of about 1.1 million GPD. The sewage treatment plant has occasionally had difficulty meeting the discharge requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Retrofitting of the plant with new technologies and other upgrade efforts are being made on an on-going basis to immediately address the difficulty in meeting Board standards at the plant.

In addition to the above efforts, the City is currently conducting a design engineering analysis to expand plant capacity to 2.5 million GPD. This expansion program will include renovation of existing facilities to increase efficiency, and enhance plant management. Additional facilities are also being designed to bring plant capacity up to the targeted 2.5 million GPD. Existing acreage and currently unused ponds are sufficient to accommodate planned expansion to serve the needs of the service area through the year 2010 and beyond.

WATER & SEWER SERVICE GOALS

1. To assure the provision of safe and healthful domestic water and sewage treatment facilities to adequately service the present and future needs of residential, commercial and industrial development within the service area.
2. To acknowledge the limited financial resources to upgrade and expand the domestic water and sewage treatment facilities of the City and provide for future facilities through the implementation of appropriate development impact fees and the raising of service fees as needed.

WATER & SEWER SERVICE POLICIES

1. The City shall develop and adopt a Public Facilities Impact Fee Ordinance, which assures the payment of a "special tax" or one-time fee adequate to cover the anticipated impact to city domestic water and sewer services and facilities.
2. The City shall institute a comprehensive and ongoing review of well and water storage facilities on an annual basis, and shall require the planning and allocation of financial and other resources to assure the timely and cost-effective expansion of the domestic water system.
3. The City shall develop and adopt a capital improvement program for the regional sewage collection and treatment system and shall coordinate the implementation of said system with all affected jurisdictions and special districts.

4. The City shall review development proposals to assure that adequate domestic water and sewer facilities exist or can be cost-effectively extended to service the development.
5. The City shall require the implementation of low flush toilets, flow restricting shower heads and other water conserving technologies in all new development and renovation projects as a means of reducing the demand on sewage treatment capacity.
6. The City shall encourage the use of water conserving landscape design including the use of drought-resistant plantings and efficient irrigation technology in private and public landscaping applications.
7. The City shall seek the adoption of the above stated domestic water and sewage treatment policies by the East Blythe County Water District to assure a comprehensive application of capacity conserving practices.

SOLID WASTE ELEMENT

Background

Solid wastes are all those wastes generated by residences, businesses and industries. The materials classified as solid waste range from newspapers and other paper products, to toxic wastes including metals and chemicals. Those wastes typically handled and disposed by a municipal waste disposal service usually include domestic and commercial food, paper containers, newspapers, metal cans and similar waste materials. Solid waste not typically disposed of in municipal landfills include hazardous wastes, body wastes, dead animals, abandoned vehicles, construction related waste materials, moved or demolished structures, furniture, appliances, etc., These materials are usually hauled by special arrangement and usually to special disposal sites. Non-toxic, non-industrial community solid wastes are currently disposed of in Class III landfills.

As capacity at landfills in California is further diminished, new methods of solid waste management emphasizing reduction of waste generated, resource recovery, conversion and recycling of all solid wastes are being pursued with greater intensity. Goals now emerging in new state legislation recognize the relationship of thoughtful solid waste disposal to the preservation of public health and safety, resource preservation, economic productivity and preservation of the quality of the environment.

Blythe Class III Landfill

The Blythe Sanitary Landfill is a 60 acre Class III landfill within a 335 acre site located in the western half of Section 31 and the Southeast quarter of Section 25, Township 5 South, Range 22 East, SBB&M. This site, leased from the Bureau of Land Management, occurs approximately seven miles north of the City of Blythe on the alluvial fan of the Big Maria Mountains. Current discharge rates to the Blythe landfill are approximately 50 tons per

day. Total remaining capacity at the landfill is estimated at 4,800,000 cubic yards with a remaining life of 70 years. In addition to non-hazardous solid waste, the Blythe landfill also receives an average of 1,500 gallons per day of the following liquid wastes: septic tank pumpings, chemical toilet wastes, grease trap pumpings, and truck wash water. These liquids are discharged into evaporation ponds separated from the landfill area.

Blythe Landfill Site Characteristics

The Blythe landfill ranges from a high elevation of 450 feet to a low elevation of 380 feet. The site is underlain by poorly sorted alluvium consisting of sand, gravel, cobbles, silt and clay. Soil permeability ranges from 6.3 to 20 inches per hour. Groundwater measurements at the site indicated water at 180.5 feet below the surface. A large, deeply incised channel occurs just east of the site and drains southeastward into the Palo Verde Valley.

Future Landfill Regulation

Several bills have been introduced into the California Legislature regarding the reduction of solid wastes being disposed in the state's landfills. These bills have focused on the use of significant and mandatory recycling programs to retrieve glass, metal, paper and other recyclable resources. The County of Riverside, as Lead Agency, is responsible for development and adoption of a waste management plan.

Municipal Solid Waste Collection Services

Solid waste collection services are provided by the Blythe Public Works Department which utilizes four (4) collection/hauling vehicles operated by a staff of 2.5 employees. Waste containers are provided by the City and range from large black plastic multi-user cans with lids to large metal bins. The black plastic containers primarily serve residences and are located in alleys of residential neighborhoods. Metal bins are used to service large commercial customers. The residential containers are emptied by automated side-loading vehicles. The large metal bins are emptied by front-loader vehicles. There is currently an on-going dialogue regarding the privatization of the solid waste collection system.

Prison Impacts on Landfill Facilities

The Chuckawalla State Prison located west of the City and beyond the General Plan Study Area will have a minor impact upon the Blythe Sanitary Landfill. The prison is expected to generate approximately 1,326 tons of solid waste per year, based upon design capacity. At 190% of capacity, the facility could generate up to 2,519 tons per year. No wastes from the prison's paint manufacturing facility will be disposed of at the Blythe Landfill. These and other "hazardous" wastes will be hauled by an approved and licensed waste transporter to a reclamation facility, and residual wastes hauled to an approved hazardous waste disposal site.

SOLID WASTE GOAL

1. Assure the long-term viability of the Blythe Sanitary Landfill and the clean, efficient and healthful collection and disposal of solid waste in the City.

SOLID WASTE POLICIES

1. The City shall coordinate with County and State officials in the development and implementation of all required landfill capacity conserving and resource recovery programs established by the State.
2. The City shall thoroughly examine and study the feasibility, cost-effectiveness and appropriateness of contracting with a private solid waste collection and hauling company.
3. The City shall investigate and, if appropriate, implement a comprehensive resource recycling program which provides City residents and business with convenient locations for depositing recyclables.
4. All new development shall be required to provide solid waste disposal containers which are screened and landscaped to a height of six feet and designed in a manner to permit ease of access and servicing by waste disposal vehicles.
5. The City shall provide convenient and efficient solid waste pick-up for residences which are single family dwellings.

PUBLIC UTILITIES ELEMENT

Background

One of the principal concerns which must be addressed in the review of development proposals is the availability of utility services. Most new developments are required to have available sewer and domestic water services, natural gas and electricity, telephone and cable television services. Issues include the long-term availability of energy resources, their safe transportation and utilization, location of energy generating plants and distribution lines, and the efficient and cost-effective extension of services.

While the provision of utility services are conducted by private companies or other public service agencies, the City plays an active role in coordinating with the service providers to assure a coherent expansion of infrastructure consistent with the land use pattern set forth in the General Plan.

Siting of major facilities including natural gas pumping stations, electrical substations, regional power plant siting, and the location of distribution or transmission lines in the City or its sphere-of-influence can affect development patterns. Presently, major facilities include Southern California Edison 500 KV and 161 KV lines, high pressure natural gas pumping and transmission lines, and telephone microwave transmission relay stations. The policies of the General Plan shall serve as notice to the service providers and public agencies and commissions which regulate them of the City's position regarding these issues.

PUBLIC UTILITIES GOAL

1. To assure the provision of safe and adequate utility services to existing and new development as a means of preserving the health and safety of the City's residents.

PUBLIC UTILITIES POLICIES

1. Major utility facilities shall be sited to assure the minimal impacts to the environment and the community, and recognizing potential environmental hazards.
2. The undergrounding of all utility lines including cable television, telephone and electrical lines of 12 KV and under shall be required in new developments.
3. The consolidation of undergrounding utility lines and other subsurface transmission facilities shall be encouraged as a means of limiting the impacts of these facilities on the disruption of traffic and roadways.
4. The shared use of major transmission corridors, where feasible, and other appropriate measures shall be encouraged as a means of preserving the aesthetic resources of the City and to lessen the visual impacts of such development.
5. Development of utility facilities shall comply with all development standards of the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
6. Where development proposals require the provision of utility easements, the City shall cooperate in securing the easements, when determined necessary.

FIRE PROTECTION ELEMENT

Background

Fire protection services are provided by the Blythe Fire Department and also the Riverside County Fire Department/California Department of Forestry through a mutual assistance agreement. The City has a single fire station located on North Commercial Street adjacent to the City's water storage tank. The City has three 1,250 gallon per minute pumpers and a new 1,250 gallon per minute pumper with a fifty foot snorkel/ladder extension which provides greater flexibility in fighting fires in taller structures. Other equipment includes one squad truck and one Fire Chief's vehicle. The City has one full time Fire Marshal and a volunteer fire fighting force of approximately 26 men.

The County Fire Department has recently finalized plans for a new fire station to be located near the intersection of Intake Boulevard and Hobsonway in the community of East Blythe. The Department will maintain its existing station at Barnard Street as a communications base. The County facilities will include three 1,200 gallon per minute pumpers and a squad vehicle.

National Fire Insurance Organizations and the National Fire Protection Association recommend, respectively, a maximum three mile and five minute response parameter for siting fire stations. While existing levels of service appear adequate to protect existing improvements in the City, continued growth will stimulate the need for additional fire station and/or equipment. Further consultation and coordination with local fire officials will be required to determine the optimum location for additional future facilities.

Fire protection can also be greatly enhanced through continued education and the strict enforcement of building codes and especially the Uniform Fire Code and the National Electrical Code. These codes have been developed through several decades of experience and have proven effective in reducing fire hazards related to faulty construction and installation of electrical wiring and other energy systems.

FIRE PROTECTION GOAL

1. Assure the protection of the City and its residents from the threat of loss of life and property from fire hazards through the provision of adequate levels of service and public awareness.

FIRE PROTECTION POLICIES

1. Maintain the Mutual Aid Agreement with the Riverside County Fire Department and continue close coordination with regard to the timely expansion of services.
2. Enforce fire codes and other applicable standards and regulations in the course of reviewing building plans and conducting building inspections.
3. The siting of industrial or agriculture related facilities which involve the storage of hazardous, flammable or explosive materials shall be conducted in such a manner as to assure the highest level of safety in strict conformance with the Uniform Fire Code and other applicable codes and regulations.
4. Potentially hazardous materials associated with the health and life-saving function of medical facilities shall be reviewed and regulated by the City and other appropriate agencies.
5. The City Fire Department, in its review of new development proposals, shall evaluate project plans on the Department's ability to provide proper fire protection. This review shall include, but shall not be limited to internal circulation, project directories, street names, and numbering systems. New developments shall comply with Fire Department standards.
6. Standards shall be established for street addressing, naming, and lighting in order to facilitate and improve emergency response.

POLICE PROTECTION ELEMENT

Background

Police protection in the City of Blythe is provided by the Blythe Police Department. The Police Department is composed of 24 full-time employees and 16 reserve officers. Police department administration facilities are located immediately south of the Riverside County Sheriff's Department and County Jail facilities where suspects are taken for holding after booking at the City Police Department. The City has the minimum equivalent of 3 patrolling officers on duty on a 24-hour basis. The Department has 10 vehicles. In addition to law enforcement, the Police Department also provides the following services: response to calls, follow-up investigations, community patrol, and traffic code enforcement.

Response time can vary significantly, depending on the location of the nearest patrol car at the time of the call. Methods to reduce or prevent crime include adequate street and security lighting, and development of "defensible space". Defensible space allows surveillance and provides the highest possible level of security, use of appropriate security hardware, and building siting and visibility. The City provides an average of three full time patrol personnel for day and night shifts. A need for additional patrol personnel to address rising crime activity and increasing population has been identified.

The City Police Department is also party to a mutual aid agreement with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department. Both departments also join forces in drug interdiction activities in the Blythe region. The County Sheriff's Department also provides law enforcement on the Colorado River. Both law enforcement agencies also encourage neighborhood watch activities in neighborhoods which can benefit from such community vigilance.

The timing of specific law enforcement needs, which will result from continued development, may need to be further enhanced with the opening of the state correctional institution west of Blythe. While the impacts of this facility and the population increase it will induce cannot be estimated with confidence, it is possible that demands on the Police Department may exceed those which would accompany an equivalent population increase from the development of other types of employment centers. Therefore, the impact of the prison's development on the demand for police services should be closely monitored over the next few years.

POLICE PROTECTION GOAL

1. Assure the provision of the highest level of security and police protection to preserve and protect the health, safety, welfare and property of community residents and businesses.

POLICE PROTECTION POLICIES

1. Encourage the utilization of crime prevention principals through the integration of project planning which results in "defensible space" or high security designs as a means of providing increased security in residential, commercial and industrial developments.
2. The City Police Department, in its review of new development proposals, shall evaluate project plans on the Department's ability to provide proper police protection. This review shall include, but shall not be limited to internal circulation, project directories, street names, and numbering systems. New developments shall comply with recommended Police Department standards.
3. Encourage and promote the Neighborhood Watch Program in all City neighborhoods.
4. Recognize the potential importance and value associated with gated communities and their enhanced effect on reducing crime in residential areas of the City.

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ELEMENT

Background

Increased development activity, a larger permanent population, and the increased percentage of families with school-age children anticipated to accompany the operation of the state correctional facility can be expected to increase pressure on staff and facilities of the Palo Verde Valley Unified School District. Facilities of the School District include three elementary schools, one junior high school, and one high school. The City is also home to the Palo Verde Community College. The City is also home to the Twin Palms Continuation High School located on N. 7th Street which provides adult education to approximately 135 day-students. There is one private school in the City; the Zion Lutheran School, located at N. 7th Street and Chanslor Way, provides classes to approximately 120 students in grades K through 8.

The Palo Verde Valley Unified School District is expected to suffer from over-crowding within the next few years and has initiated plans to construct a new elementary school north of Chanslor Way on Broadway. In the past few years the school districts in California have been empowered to collect school impact fees for all new residential and commercial development occurring within their respective school districts. Legislation passed by the California legislature which became effective on January 1, 1987 permits school districts to levy an impact fee of up to \$1.53 per square foot in residential development, and up to \$0.25 per square foot for commercial or industrial development. These fees must be paid to the school district prior to the issuance of building permits by the City, and must be earmarked for the development of additional classroom facilities.

Library Facilities

The City is host to the Palo Verde Library located at the northwest corner of Broadway and Chanslor Way. The library is approximately 4,700 square feet in size and contains over 20,000 volumes on a wide range of topics including fiction, non-fiction and reference materials. The Palo Verde High School Library is an important source of books and reference materials. The Palo Verde Community College Library, while not available as a lending library for non-students, also provides a source of reference and research material which can be utilized by non-college students within the library. The Palo Verde Historical Society is also an important source of reference materials on the background and history of the City and the Palo Verde Valley. The anticipated substantial increase in the City's population may require the addition of library services and facilities.

SCHOOLS & LIBRARIES GOAL

1. Assure the provision of education and library facilities that provide convenient access to these important education and cultural resources for all members of the community.

SCHOOLS & LIBRARIES POLICIES

1. Assist and coordinate with the Palo Verde School District and County and State agencies in the planning and provision of educational facilities to provide a maximum opportunity for the education and cultural enhancement of all residents of the City.
2. Cooperate with the School District in the process to secure school impact fees from developers in accordance with State law.
3. Investigate the need for and feasibility of enhanced public library facilities within the City as a means of enhancing the education and cultural focus of the City's residents.
4. Preserve and protect existing and future school and library sites from excessive noise and traffic conditions, and ensure their compatibility with surrounding land uses.
5. Coordinate with the various responsible districts and agencies regarding the need and identification of future locations of schools and libraries.

HEALTH SERVICES ELEMENT

Background

The availability of adequate medical services and facilities has been an important consideration for many of the residents of the City of Blythe and the Palo Verde Valley. The Palo Verde Community Hospital is the only medical facility in the region and its continued viability is an important issue for the region's residents. The Palo Verde Hospital is a 55 bed privately owned community hospital with a newly modernized emergency room, physician staffed on a 24-hour basis. Additional contiguous lands have been secured by the hospital, further enhancing its opportunities for expansion. The hospital employs approximately 157 persons. The Blythe Nursing Care facility located on Chanslor Way has 49 beds and provides 24-hour skilled nursing care.

Other hospital facilities which service the region include the Parker Community Hospital, which is located approximately 40 miles north of Blythe in Parker, Arizona. This facility has 39 beds and a 24-hour emergency room. The hospital plans to add another ten beds and to construct a nursing home on site. Other regional facilities include John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital, located in the City of Indio approximately 100 miles west of Blythe. This hospital is licensed for 130 beds and provides 24-hour emergency room facilities, and is a base for paramedic service.

County Health Facilities

Riverside County provides several health and mental health services in the Blythe region. These include a Public Health Nurse who conducts epidemiologic investigations and preventative health education and counseling. The County maintains a Public Health office on Broadway and also contracts with Las Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo to provide clinical medical services related to child health and disease control.

The County Department of Mental Health provides services in the Blythe area through a service contract with the Desert Community Mental Health Center. The Blythe Counseling Center is located on East Hobsonway in Blythe, providing client assessment, crisis intervention, individual and group counseling, medication monitoring and case management.

HEALTH SERVICES GOAL

1. Assure the availability of quality health care facilities, physicians and services to promote the good health and well-being of the City's residents.

HEALTH SERVICES POLICIES

1. Coordinate with the Palo Verde Community Hospital and other medical service providers to assure adequate health care facilities and services to meet the needs of the City's residents.
2. Encourage the development of medical and health care facilities which address the changing demographic characteristics of the community.
3. Develop specific development standards and guidelines regulating the siting and location of medical and health care facilities, and ensuring the development of compatible land uses in their vicinity.
4. Hospitals and convalescent facilities shall be regarded as sensitive land uses and shall be located in areas not subject to excessive noise levels or difficult vehicular access.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS ELEMENT

Background

With the development of major flood control projects along the Colorado River, the City of Blythe and the sphere-of-influence have received substantial protection from major flooding from this river. While the region appears to be safe from major flooding from this source, the McCoy Wash could pose a potential threat to improvements in the City's northwestern sphere area. The McCoy Wash has the potential of generating a 100 year storm flow of up to 35,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). Since the development of the up-river flood control structures on the Colorado, particularly the Hoover Dam, the valley's extensive system of flood control dikes have fallen into disrepair.

The area also lies within 45 miles of the main trace of the San Andreas Fault system which has the potential of generating a maximum probable earthquake of up to 8.3 on the Richter scale. While the area can be considered safe from ground rupture and the most violent ground acceleration, it could be subjected to substantial groundshaking, which in conjunction with the high ground water table and poorly consolidated soils, could result, in extreme cases, in a significant liquefaction hazard.

The magnitude of the effect of natural disasters on life and property can be addressed and minimized, and a coherent response to such disasters prepared. The goal is to establish a realistic assessment of the potential for disaster and develop plans for recovery after a disaster has occurred. Due to the large number of public, quasi-public and private agencies involved in emergency preparedness planning and their differing areas of responsibility, cooperation and coordination between agencies is essential.

Communication is the critical element in any emergency response capability and must be maintained even in the event of wide-ranging disastrous events. City, County and State emergency and safety agencies must be able to remain in contact in order to coordinate the provision of supplies and personnel. To this end, it is imperative that regular and effective on-going organizational meetings be held in order to assure the efficient and responsive provision of emergency services and supplies.

The development of a carefully conceived emergency preparedness plan includes a disaster operations plan, which sets forth the organization and administration of disaster response efforts such as debris removal, evacuation and emergency communications, law enforcement, fire protection and rescue, the provision of health care and emergency shelter, allocation of food and medical supplies, and the maintenance and restoration of critical services including transportation, water and sewer, electricity, natural gas and telephone services. The Riverside County Office of Disaster Preparedness is responsible for the coordination of the various agencies in the event of an emergency.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GOAL

1. Assure the provision of a coordinated, responsive and effective emergency preparedness disaster implementation plan to provide a high degree of readiness to respond to disastrous events.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POLICIES

1. The future siting and development of critical and essential facilities shall be reviewed to assure the maximum possible protection from environmental hazards including liquefaction and other earthquake related threats and from major flooding.
2. Continue to participate and coordinate with Riverside County in the development of a coherent community response plan to disasters which is designed to minimize the loss of life and property.
3. Coordinate and cooperate with the County of Riverside in the development of a public information program advising the community on how to prepare for and cope with an emergency.
4. Continue to update and implement the Disaster Preparedness Plan adopted by the County of Riverside.
5. Encourage the installation of emergency generators at public facilities and existing and future radio and television and other communication facilities.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

Background

The City owns property and facilities within the City which constitute community assets and must be considered in the context of developing the General Plan. These lands support existing or future facilities including city hall, city maintenance and equipment storage yards, raw lands, and lands to be held in public trust for the preservation of natural resources. Lands and facilities owned and/or controlled by the City also include public roads.

Public buildings and facilities also include telephone switching stations and electrical substations, post offices and other governmental offices. While this discussion centers on lands and facilities of the City, it must also be kept in mind that the siting of these other public facilities must be given special consideration in the planning process, just as do the siting of gas and electrical transmission lines, pumping, and electrical sub-stations.

The location of public buildings and facilities is largely dependent upon their function in the community. In the case of City Hall, which expresses the pride of the city's residents, it must provide adequate and functional spaces where residents can come and conduct business. It should also be conveniently located to all of the City's residents.

Likewise, the location of city storage and maintenance yards must be addressed in the context of another set of considerations. This is also the case with electrical substations and telephone switching stations which must address specific technical consideration. Of critical concern in all cases is the compatible and harmonious integration of public buildings and facilities into the overall land use pattern of the city as it exists and as it continues to develop.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS & FACILITIES GOAL

1. To assure the coherent, compatible, and aesthetically satisfying integration of public buildings and facilities into the overall planning of the City.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS & FACILITIES POLICIES

1. The siting of public buildings and facilities which house city government shall provide functional, aesthetically pleasing, and convenient places for residents and city officials to conduct business.

2. Coordinate with public utilities and special districts to assure the least intrusive and most compatible integration of related buildings and facilities into the land use pattern of the City.
3. Identify, study, and evaluate potential sites for a new civic center.
4. The siting of equipment storage and maintenance yards and facilities will be conducted in a manner which is sensitive to and has a minimum impact on surrounding existing and future land uses.

CHAPTER VII. GLOSSARY

ADT	Average Daily Trips. The total volume of traffic on a given road averaged over a 24-hour period.
Air Basin	A large region that shares a common geographical area and atmospheric interaction. The boundaries of an air basin are generally mountains, hills, or bodies of water.
Air Pollution Emissions	Discharges into the atmosphere, usually described in weight per unit of time for a given pollutant.
Alluvium	Soil, sand, gravel, or similar material deposited by running water, sometimes miles from its source.
Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone	Zones established under the California Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Act, which define potentially and/or recently active earthquake faults which could be hazardous to structures in the event of surface faulting or fault creep.
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan. A plan to achieve and maintain ambient air quality standards in jurisdictions designated by the state legislature.
Aquifer	A geologic formation which stores, transmits and yields significant quantities of water to wells and springs.
Arterial Highway	A four lane divided highway for through traffic to which access from abutting properties is kept to a minimum. Minimum right-of-way shall be 100 feet.
Bikeway	Designated facilities classified, and specifically designated, constructed and intended for the use of bicycle travel.
Blowsand	An environmental condition in which quantities of sand are blown in the wind. This condition may occur in areas of loose sand or sandy loam soils and strong prevailing winds.

Buffers	Land uses which protect public safety and provide sufficient distance and barriers between incompatible land uses by lessening the effects of noise, dust, vibration, visual blight, or other impacts caused by a particular land use.
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant. Federal allocation of funds to a jurisdiction for discretionary disbursement, generally utilized for local community development projects.
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act. State legislation adopted in 1970 which ensures the protection of the environment. This legislation also required California governmental agencies at all levels to develop standards and procedures necessary to protect the environmental quality of their jurisdiction.
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level. The average equivalent A-weighted sound level during a 24 hour period, obtained after addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., and after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels before 7 a.m. and after 10 p.m.
Cogeneration	The process of generating electricity using waste heat from an industrial, commercial, or manufacturing process.
Collector Roadway	A four lane street which is intended to serve intensive residential land use, or to convey traffic through a subdivision to roads of equal or greater capacity. Minimum right-of-way is 88 feet.
Conservation	The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect.
Contiguous Development	Development which is adjacent to already existing development, even if separated by roads, streets, utility easements, and railroad rights-of-way.
CVAG	Coachella Valley Association of Governments. An association of local governments that have jurisdiction within the Coachella Valley.
dba	A-weighted Sound Level. The sound pressure level in decibels as measured on a sound level meter using the A-weighted filter network. The A-weighted filter de-emphasizes the very low and very high frequency components of the sound in a manner similar to the response of the human ear, and gives good correlation with subjective reactions to noise.

Design Criteria	Specific standards and regulations which guide the design of a project.
Earthquake	A shaking or trembling of the earth's crust that is volcanic or tectonic in nature.
EIR	Environmental Impact Report. An informational document used in the decision-making process which identifies the effects of a proposed project or activity on the natural and man-made environments. It must be prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, and must address nine mandatory issues: project description, environmental setting, adverse environmental effects, short and long term use, irreversible environmental changes, growth inducement, alternatives to the project, and natural and human environmental resources.
Endangered Species	A species or subspecies of bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile or invertebrate for which the prospects of survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, over-exploitation, predation, competition or disease.
Fault	A fracture in the earth's crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted.
Fault Hazard Zone	A designated area of possible fault movement.
Fuel Modification Program	A fire prevention program for those developable areas surrounded by natural open space. The program should include the graduated decreases in native plant densities and the substitution of fire-resistant plants near development areas. The pattern of vegetation removal and introduction of new vegetation should be consistent with wildlife habitat conservation, thus minimizing impacts to the biological composition of the area. Provisions for continued maintenance should also be developed and implemented.
Fire Response Time	The amount of time it takes for the fire department to respond to a first alarm fire.
Floodplain	The land areas that are subject to flooding from the 100 year flood, but not including the actual floodway.

Floodway	The channel of a river or other watercourse and adjacent land areas necessary to discharge the waters from the 100 year flood without increasing the water surface elevation of that flood more than one foot at any point.
Freeway	A highway upon which the abutter's right of access is controlled and which provides separated grades at intersecting streets.
General Plan Road	Any road indicated in the Circulation Element of the General Plan.
Geothermal Resources	The natural heat of the earth, the energy in whatever form below the surface of the earth present in, resulting from, created by, or from which may be extracted natural heat, and all minerals in solution or other products in whatever form obtained from naturally heated fluids, brines, associated gases and steam, excluding oil, hydrocarbon gas or other hydrocarbon substances.
Goal	An expression of a general, ultimate ideal to be sought. It reflects basic community values and establishes the emphasis for formulating objectives, policies and implementation measures. They are general, often timeless, and do not lend themselves to measurement.
Ground Rupture	A break in the ground's surface resulting from the movement of a fault.
Groundshaking Zone	A designated area that can be expected to experience a groundshaking intensity during a maximum probable "design" earthquake.
Groundwater	Subsurface or underground water resource.
Hazardous Waste	A waste or combination of wastes, which because of its quantity, concentration or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics poses a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or environment.
High Fire Hazard Areas	An area where, due to slope, fuel, weather or other fire-related condition, the potential loss of life and property from a fire necessitates special fire protection measures and planning before development occurs.
Historic Infilling	Important, significant, famous or decisive in history. The building out or completion of development of an area before starting development of adjacent undeveloped lands.

Infrastructure	The physical systems and services which support development and people, such as streets and highways, transit services, airports, water and sewer systems, etc.
LAFCO	Local Agency Formation Commission. A State agency with the responsibility and authority to approve or deny (with or without modification) all proposals for the establishment (incorporation) of cities and special districts, reorganization or dislocation of them, and/or proposals to annex. The LAFCO must also establish a sphere of influence for cities and special districts.
Land Use Category	The classification which identifies allowable land uses for a project site, based upon the availability of public services and facilities, the adequacy of the circulation system and surrounding area development.
Landfill	A system of trash and garbage disposal in which waste is buried between layers of earth to build up low-lying land.
Ldn	Day- night sound level.
Leach Field	That portion of the septic tank system which disperses dissolved waste products into the surrounding soil.
Liquefaction	A temporary fluid condition in water-saturated loose sandy soil caused by shock, such as an earthquake. It can cause serious soil settlement, slumping, or failure of structure foundations.
Major Arterial Highway	Six lane highways designed to serve through traffic and high intensity urban land uses, with restricted access from abutting properties. Rights-of-way vary from 110 to 120 feet.
Mitigation	The lessening or elimination of the impacts of an action or project through changes in the proposed action or project, or the undertaking of additional measures.
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Act. Federal legislation passed in 1969 which insures that Federal actions are not going to lessen environmental quality. This legislation also required public agencies to consider the environmental costs of their actions and provide full disclosure of environmental effects for public review and comment.
Noise Contour	A line on and passing through points exposed to the same sound level. Contours form bands of varying widths centering around a noise source.

Noise Impacted Area	The noise impact area, in square statute miles, is the total land area within the noise impact boundary less area deemed to have a compatible land use.
One Hundred Year Floodplain	The land areas that are subject to flooding from a flood caused by a storm with the statistical likelihood of occurring once in a hundred year time span.
Open Space	Land or water which is essentially unimproved.
Overdraft	The condition of a groundwater basin where the amount of water withdrawn by pumping exceeds the amount of water replenishing the basin.
Paleontology	A science that deals with the life of past geologic periods and is based on the study of fossil remains of plants or animals.
Percolation Test	Test of a soil's ability to absorb and permit seepage of sewage effluent.
Physical Constraint	A physical feature or characteristic of land which prevents or limits the development of that land.
Policy	A statement which sets forth guidelines for future action.
Prehistoric	Relating to times pre-dating written history.
Program	Series of tasks designed to implement policies set forth in the General Plan.
Rare Species	A species or subspecies of bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile or invertebrate that, although not presently threatened with extinction, is in such small numbers throughout its range that it may be endangered if its environment worsens.
Reclamation	The combined process of land treatment that minimizes water degradation, air pollution, damage to aquatic or wildlife habitat, flooding, erosion, and other adverse effects from surface mining operations including adverse surface effects incidental to underground mines, so that mined lands are reclaimed to a usable condition which is readily adaptable for alternate land uses and creates no danger to public health and safety.
Redevelopment Agency	An agency comprised of City staff and/or elected officials, to supervise and allocate funds for the improvement of blighted or otherwise run-down areas of the City.

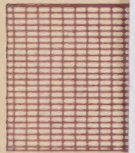
Retrofitting	Supplying an existing building or facility with new equipment, parts, or features, usually in an effort to improve the efficiency of energy use.
Rights-of-way	The entire width of property for the use of highways, flood and drainage works, overhead and underground utilities, or any related improvements.
Road Alignment	The location of a road in relation to other roads such that they form a connected circulation system.
RSA	Regional Statistical Area. A group of census tracts or districts used for economic analysis.
SCAG	The Southern California Association of Governments. An association of cities providing regional demographic and legislative information for the Southern California area.
Scenic Corridor	The land area outside of the highway right-of-way within the line of sight which can be realistically subjected to protective land use controls.
Seiching	An earthquake-induced wave in a lake, reservoir or harbor.
Seismicity	The quality or state of being of, subject to, or caused by, an earthquake.
Septic Tank	A tank in which the solid matter of continuously flowing sewage is disintegrated by bacteria.
Shall	Indicates an unequivocal directive.
Should	Signifies a slightly less rigid directive than "shall" to be honored in the absence of compelling considerations.
Slump	Soil failure resulting from a slope, which is too steep for the soil's resistance capacity, being barren and exposed to water.
Solid Waste	All solid, semisolid, and liquid wastes, including garbage, trash, refuse, paper, rubbish, ashes, industrial wastes, demolition and construction wastes, abandoned vehicles and parts thereof, discarded home and industrial appliances, manure, vegetable or animal solid and semi-solid wastes, and other discarded solid and semisolid wastes.
Specific Plans	A tool to implement the General Plan which details land use and circulation plans for a specific site. Specific Plans are required in sensitive areas or those designated for combined commercial and residential uses.

Spheres of Influence	The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local governmental agency.
Subsidence	The gradual, local settling or sinking of the earth's surface with little or no horizontal motion. Subsidence is usually the result of gas, oil, or water extraction, hydrocompaction, or peat oxidation, and not the result of a landslide or slope failure.
Surface Mining	All, or any part of, the process involved in the mining of minerals on mined lands by removing overburden and mining directly from the mineral deposits, open-pit mining of minerals naturally exposed, mining by the auger method, dredging and quarrying, or surface work incidental to an underground mine.
Tectonics	Of or pertaining to the forces involved in, or the resulting structures or features of the upper part of the earth's crust.
Threatened Species	Any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
Transportation Corridor	The area adjacent to major transportation routes.
Trip Generators	Person and vehicular travel generated in accordance with the type and intensity of land use.
Water Basin	The drainage or catchment area of a stream or lake.
Watercourse	A permanent stream; intermittent stream; river, brook, creek, channel or ditch for water, whether natural or man-made.
Watershed	The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to its flow; the entire region drained by a waterway or which drains into a lake or reservoir.
Zoning	A legal device used by local jurisdictions to control development density and insure that land uses are properly situated in relation to one another.

Oversized Map or Foldout not scanned.

Item may be viewed at the
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RESIDE



R-H (High Density)

COMMERCIAL

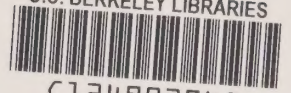
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